

GORDON
LEAGUE
BALLADS



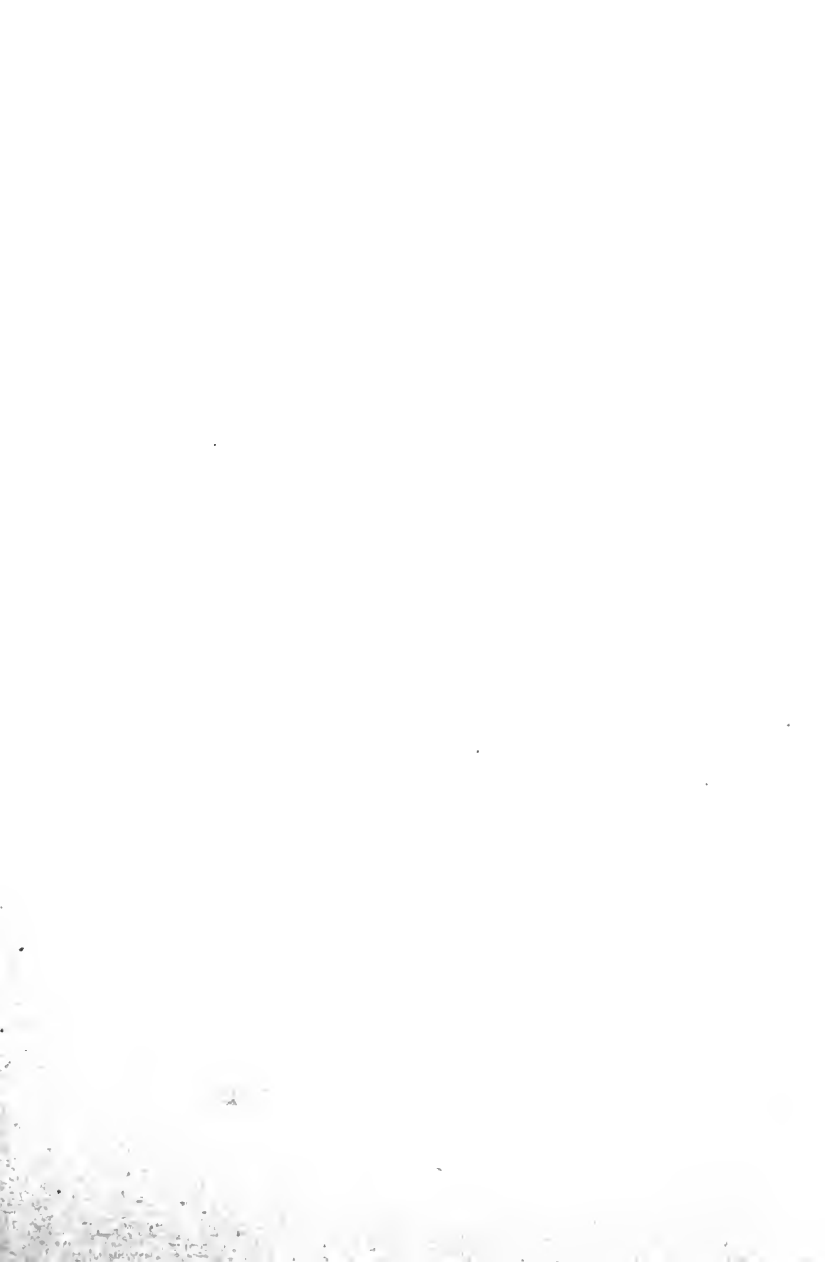
DRAMATIC
STORIES IN
VERSE . .

SECOND SERIES

BY
JIM'S
WIFE



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Gordon League
Ballads



Gordon League Ballads

Dramatic Stories in verse

BY

JIM'S WIFE

(MRS. CLEMENT NUGENT JACKSON)

Second Series

London

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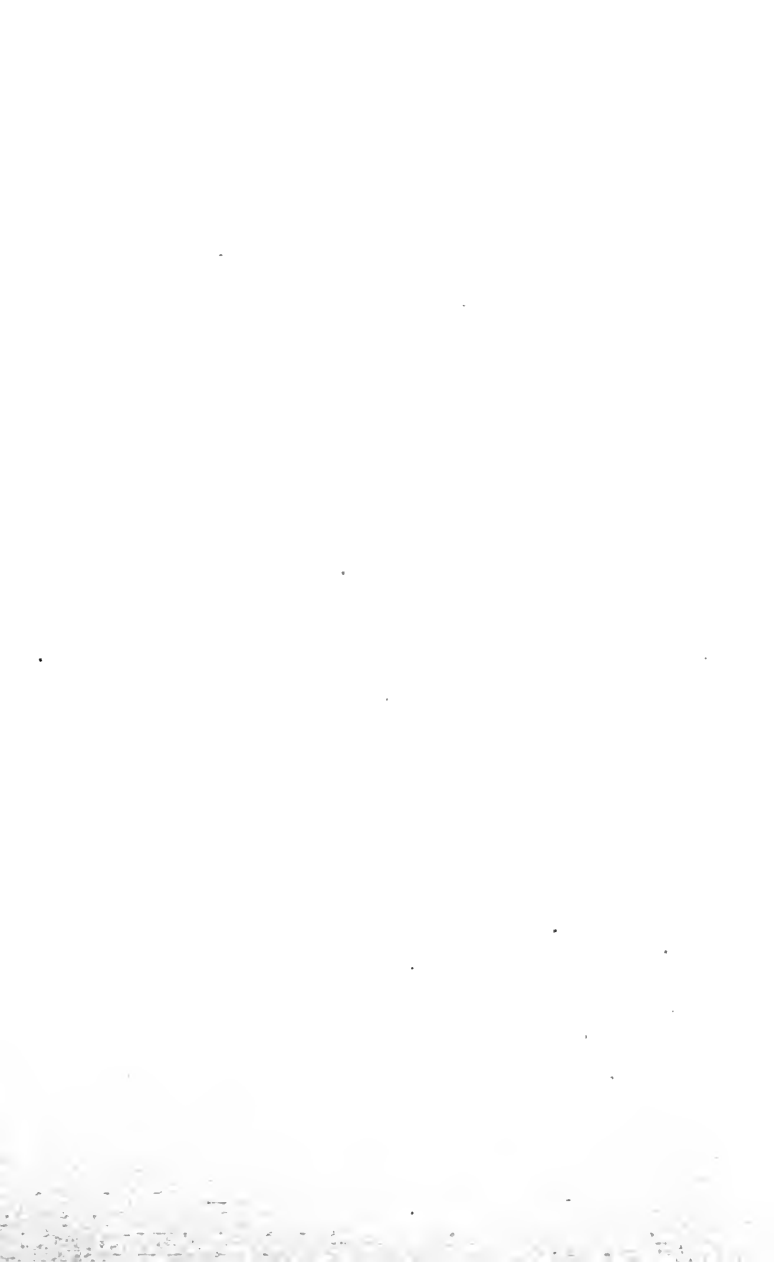
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TO THE BELOVED MEMORY OF
A GOOD WOMAN,
TO THE AUGUST MEMORY OF
A GREAT QUEEN,
QUEEN VICTORIA,
WHO IN HER LIFE-TIME GRACIOUSLY ACCEPTED THE
FIRST VOLUME OF THE GORDON LEAGUE BALLADS,
THIS SECOND VOLUME,
TELLING OF THE PEOPLE WHOM SHE TENDERLY LOVED,
AND OVER WHOM SHE GLORIOUSLY REIGNED,
IS,
WITH THE AUTHOR'S LIFE-LONG LOYALTY,
MOST REVERENTLY
DEDICATED.





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Dramatic Stories in Verse.

I.

TO THE READER.

THE fascination which the Drama exerts over us is vast and indisputable, and the reason of it lies in the ancient truth that the Spirit of the Drama is inseparable from human life : truth insisted upon until it has petrified into truism, yet always fresh and wonderful to those who pause to consider it. The surprise of unanticipated and sudden action waits before every threshold : the elements of tragedy, of comedy, surround us from our cradles : the variable play of alternating mood and emotion, of pity, passion, terror, hatred, love, is with us even in our dreams.

This being so no one class possesses above another the monopoly of the Story Dramatic.

The eventful histories of Duchesses, Detectives, Actresses, Brigands, profligate Peers, and so forth—which we have been accustomed to accept as furnishing more abundant material to the dramatic writer in prose or verse than others, contain nothing that has not its analogue in the homelier histories of the herd-boy and the factory “hand.”

The mighty music of the Drama is universal : its air may be the simplest fingering of the scale, unadorned by thunderous chord or brilliant chromatic elaboration : far from sounding only in the private orchestras of the great or

the notorious, every note in the gamut of dramatic emotion can—as the creator of “Little Dorrit,” as the author of “Silas Marner,” taught us long since—be heard vibrating through the lowliest life.

And as of dramatic emotion so also of the sublime spiritual and moral forces which underlie the life of man and find their highest expression in deeds and words—heroic! beautiful! compassionate! Their area is limitless, and their mightier music, God-inspired, is ringing as sweetly and melodiously where the Poor gather together, as in the assemblies of the Rich.

Such reflection may, to the cultured reader, redeem from tediousness the perusal of the simple tales chronicled in the Gordon League Ballads, which are stories of working men and women told by one of themselves in their own unadorned phraseology, and are taken from actual life, or founded on actual fact.

The wide welcome accorded to the First Volume of the series has impelled the Author towards the happy and grateful task of writing the second.

II.

TO THE RECITER.

As oars to a boat, as steam to a locomotive, as water to a mill-wheel, so is the Reciter to the Writer of Ballads such as these, which are written, it is true, for whosoever may care to read plain stories of the "toiling folk," but which are written in the form of dramatic recitations.

Without the Reciter the Writer's mission fails : the ballad droops upon the printed page as helplessly as the oarless boat lies by the bank lacking the propelling power that carries it out, and on. Upon the Reciter's interpretation of soliloquy and scene, colour and character, the writer of recitations depends for justification and recognition of his labour, for it is through the medium of dramatic declamation that the conceptions he has striven to embody, the messages which have glowed in his own heart, reach and move his fellow men. By the reciters, therefore, of both sexes, who may find in the contents of this volume some material not wholly useless, the Author earnestly desires that the spirit of the work shall be understood.

The ungarnished plainness of the language employed may repel many, and the syllabic irregularity of the metre may perplex, until it is explained that a real Working-woman is supposed to be speaking throughout, and that it has been the Author's aim to reproduce as faithfully as she was able, the simple colloquial flow of narrative to which she has often listened, and the idiosyncrasies of manner which she has

carefully studied. The personality of Annie Hyde should therefore at starting be clearly grasped, and the lines of the ballads should be learnt by heart so thoroughly and completely that in oral delivery a fluent, natural, and conversational effect is attained, and the fetter of the rhymed couplet is scarcely perceivable.

In the counsel to the Reciter prefacing the first volume of the Gordon League Ballads, the Author has endeavoured to delineate as accurately as memory would serve the living original of Jim's Wife, who is still living to-day in this Year of Grace 1903. To those who have read the description of her there given, repetition will seem wearisome: but for the sake of those who have not read it, it may be well to quote an extract here and there, and to reiterate counsel already given which can now be strengthened by the experience of many who have used the ballads since their first appearing, and whose letters have been a source of deep pleasure and interest to the Author.

Annie Hyde—to quote from the First Volume—is, “pleasant to look at: a fine, strong, comely woman of middle age, above the average height, carrying herself with a certain simple dignity.” She is “no saint . . . a very human, fallible, work-a-day woman, quick-tempered and impulsive, prone to ‘speak her mind’ roughly on occasions. . . . Yet . . . a Christian woman. . . . In her limited sphere she has much influence. She is filled with the experience of the life of the People. The wild waves of humanity beat and break round her doors. She lives in the midst of much that is horrible, much that is beautiful. Tragedy and Joy, Crime and Heroism, touch hands with her in the street.”

She is no cockney, but was born and bred in the Shires,

and carries a sweet and subtle atmosphere of the country with her into these regions "where the long street roars," into the long streets and narrow streets, and crowded alleys of London wherein she has passed a migratory existence as the wife of a Factory "hand."

The fact that she is not a cockney cannot be impressed too strongly upon the interpreter who would do her justice.

She does not drop or transpose her aspirates, or mispronounce her vowels, after the manner of the coster-woman, or that erudite English Bow-bred damsel who observed that the "H'idea of the Shykespear plys being written by Bycon was h'impident." At the same time her diction is not that of the Educated Classes: and the Reciter who delivers her homely speech—as many amateurs do—with the cultured accent of a gentlewoman, errs gravely. Such cultured declamation unwittingly destroys the life-likeness of the character portrayed. The prototype of Annie Hyde is not strictly grammatical: clips her 'g's: speaks of a shillin', a herrin', and nothin': and deals freely in the expressive "says I," and "says he," of the uncultivated story-teller. Yet there are moments when voice, accent, and expression, ascend to higher levels. Those who have studied the Poor, who have listened to a story of horror or sorrow told by their lips, cannot fail to have noted how, when reaching the climax of the narrative, the speaker's language will often exhibit an absence of colloquialisms, a pure simplicity of nervous English, a dramatic force, a dignity, even a grandeur—which is as remarkable as it is unconscious.

"She could speak like a lady herself, could Mother," says Annie Hyde, in describing the death-bed scene between her mother and Squire Lawrence's wife. This is not exaggeration, but truth. At such a supreme moment a peasant

woman, newly widowed, of the noble type of Annie's mother, would speak with the stately naturalness of "a lady," and the Reciter who delivers her speech aright must assume, for the nonce, both dignity of attitude and clearness of enunciation.

This applies with equal pertinence to various passages scattered throughout the ballads. When Annie Hyde speaks earnestly her interpreter should realise that earnestness elevates, and does not lower, speech and gesture, and should therefore abandon the rougher, homelier inflexion of the woman's ordinary accent, and render such words clearly and euphoniously.

But the real Annie Hyde is not only an earnest, but a merry-hearted woman—one of those refreshing people whose merriment "doeth good like a medicine." To quote again from the life-portrait sketched in the First Volume:—"Her humour is one of her most delightful points. In ordinary conversation it bubbles up a dozen times in a dozen ways: in a smile, a wink, a nod, a twitch of the lip, a glance of the eye, a shake of the shoulders, and supremely in her laughter, which is hearty and delicious, and in her girlish days must have been sweet as a bird's carolling. Her humour breaks across her most serious moods, yet without producing at any time a jarring or discordant note; on the contrary, it seems to merely rivet the hearer's attention and to deepen the effect of her after graver words."

And the Reciter will help the impersonation by remembering that this humour never trends towards vulgarity or caricature.

For the sake of supposed humorous effect, some reciters have converted Mrs. Hyde into a grotesque, or purely "comic" character. This is to depart altogether from the

pattern of the original. There is nothing grotesque about her—nothing in the nature of the ridiculous. She does not wear a poke bonnet or carry an exaggerated umbrella. It is a mistake to represent her, as a rule, as an “old” or even distinctly “elderly” person. In “The End of Mullins” she may appear as an old woman, may be presented as a grandmother of a loveable type, looking back at earlier and harder days from the happy vantage ground of a placid and comfortable present; but in most of the ballads she can be represented by the Reciter as a young, attractive woman. The character of the costume most suitable to her has been described in the First Volume, and need not be here touched upon.

Furthermore, some reciters, anxious only to amuse, have eliminated from Annie Hyde’s tales as far as possible their serious side, on the assumption that ethical teaching of any kind is distasteful, in a recitation, to any audience. The Author does not presume to dictate to reciters professional or non-professional, but in sending out another collection of life-stories which are, on the whole, more “serious” than the last, she would plead with those on whose histrionic talent she is dependent, that they should not stoop to such elimination.

Naturally judgment must be exercised, and judicious selection made of themes likely to interest particular assemblies: such a story as “Lost” for example, not being adapted to “Drawing-room” recitation, or to a wholly secular programme: but to take away from a story of human life that ethical teaching which is its vital essence, is to water down to tastelessness the wine of Power, and to depart from the principles of the Highest art.

The vital essence of all human life is religion—a spirit broad

and pervasive as light and air. The real Annie Hyde is a religious woman or nothing. In the First Volume the Author has called these life-stories told by her, "lay-sermons," and though the epithet may have needlessly frightened some reciters away, as lay-sermons they must stand or fall. Without the inner core of spiritual teaching, drawn from the Word of God, their outer wrapping of language is mere fluff of commonplace predestined to the winds.

It may be a more daring and more difficult thing to essay a recitation which conveys a moral lesson than one which contains humour and nothing else; but no Reciter, professional or amateur, need be daunted by the difficulty. The amusing "piece," without doubt, is easy and reassuring: it provokes applause: it is safe to win the tumultuous recall so dear to the performer's heart: but the moral lesson, if rightly told, will hold human beings in a grip of steel. Reciters who can ascend the platform knowing they stand backed by the tremendous power of Truth need have no fear of their reception. To the attractiveness of absolute fact they may trust unreservedly, for there are few audiences, Eastwards or Westwards, that will not listen absorbedly to something, however serious, when told it actually "happened."

And to this preliminary "telling" it may be here observed, the Author attaches the utmost importance.

Almost the most solemn of Annie Hyde's stories founded on fact may be safely attempted in a Hall which has just rung to the uproarious chorus of a comic song, provided the Reciter first of all arrests attention by an appropriate spoken introduction, which prepares the minds of the people for what will follow. Some material for these "introductions" will be found on the fly-leaves attached to the ballads themselves, and should be studied: though the happiest are

those which do not depend upon the rigid letter, but adapt themselves to the spirit of place and hour : in other words, the cleverer and more practised the speaker the more easily will the mood of the audience be swayed into harmony with the succeeding subject. Anyone who has been fortunate enough to hear Mrs. Kendal introduce a subject from the platform will realise this. The unrivalled charm and grace of one of England's greatest actresses is never more delightfully displayed than in these inaugural words of hers, which, flavoured by a delicate wit, would prepare an audience to swallow heresy, schism, and High Treason, were she so disposed.

Yet the extravagant fear which some Reciters conceive for serious subjects is as intense as it is illusory.

At a public Fête organised for the relief of the wives and widows of soldiers, fighting and killed in the Boer and British war, the Author heard one of the Gordon League Ballads delivered by a gentleman, a well-known professional Reciter, who had chosen it to close a programme of light and lively items. He had carefully cut out every line in it which contained either pathetic or moral sentiment, and he gave his hearers, most ably, another sketch which was pure comedy from beginning to end. The majority present, not knowing the story in its entirety, laughed and applauded : a few, amongst whom was the Author, knowing it well, experienced a sensation of painful disappointment.

In subsequent conversation on the subject, the Reciter explained that he imagined his hearers were gathered together for the purpose of diversion only, and would resent a single sentence which breathed pathos or solemnity, or savoured—ever so lightly—of the pulpit. "I could not introduce a reference to the Bible," he said frankly. "They

did not want to sigh or cry. They wanted to laugh." He was mistaken.

Wanted to laugh! Yes. We all want to laugh and small blame to us. But we do not want to laugh for ever. There comes a time when we have laughed enough and would fain be grave. His audience had laughed consumedly at his brilliant impersonations for an hour and a half, and could he have believed it would not have resented, but would have listened willingly to the whole of the story, to words from a working-woman striking those deeper chords ever ready to vibrate responsively in every human breast.

The real Annie Hyde is not only a religious woman: she is as strong and sensible as those must be who draw their inspiration from the Wellhead of Wisdom and Common-sense—the Bible. And Strength and Sense can always hold their own. Let timid reciters nerve themselves with this reflection. When she speaks of the Bible she speaks of it with no uncertain sound. She enforces its precepts upon her hearers neither falteringly nor faint-heartedly, but with the ringing emphasis of absolute conviction. She does not apologise for quoting "a text"—a statute from the glorious Charter of our Common Liberty—with that weak and curiously deprecatory air observable in many, who, in mentioning a text, contrive to infuse their own strange mental discomfort into their hearers. She does not apologise for giving the Bible-word which carries with it the rescue and salvation of struggling creatures. When you throw a life-rope to a drowning friend you are not apologetic about it. As you listen to her it is easy to associate with her hearty voice and happy eyes, the defender of the Bible against the scoffs of the Foreman,

James Peglar: the woman who points to the Bible as the foundation of our National greatness in argument with the melancholy Mullins: the messenger of Forgiveness, who unrolls the shining folds of its banner of Hope before the despairing eyes of the thief and would-be murderer, Dave. And in proportion as her interpreters share her convictions, will they escape the weakness of delivery which preludes failure, and insure the forcibility which achieves success.

It was said of Canon Body, when at the height of his fame as a preacher, that he preached "as a dying man to dying men."

It is this passionateness of earnestness which will enable the reciter of "serious" recitations to win a hearing not only from the lawless and degraded, but from those who are—as Bishop Winnington Ingram finely puts it—hedged about with the "Pride of Refinement."

In his preface to that noble book "Under the Dome," the Bishop, speaking from the centre of London to the living millions of London, says that the message he sends out has—"no meaning except in relation to the manifold needs and longings of ordinary men and women . . . men and women . . . who need bread for the daily battle of life." And this is surely the highest meaning that any message could have. Something of this spirit of the true Preacher should animate all true Reciters. Let them not fear to give bread. The people are tired of the husks and chaff showered in double-handfuls by their would-be entertainers. Believe it, even such a simple story as the story of Grannie Pettinger, inadequately as it is here set down, yet no fancy sketch, no fiction, but the true record of a good deed done by one of the myriads of Earth's forgotten Poor, will be received as cordially in the Music Hall as in the Mission Hall, and will

gain a hearing as attentive as that accorded to the story of amorous adventure, not too respectable, which for ever occupies the foremost place in the popular programme.

One writer, the renowned writer of Coster-songs, has dared to believe and to demonstrate, that virtue can be made as popular in Music Hall circles as vice. To the honour of Albert Chevalier be it written, the moral influence of those two songs, "Mrs. 'Enery 'Awkins," and "My Old Dutch," is as pure and uplifting as the influence of many a hymn.

Finally the Author would say to the Reciter, with all her heart—Let none fear to shed abroad the spring sunshine of Bible-truth, the saving, the redeeming radiance that greens the wintry wastes of wasted lives. It is true that the world hates dulness: and for this reason the Writer, the Actor, the Singer, the Reciter, the Appealer to the ear of the world, dreads dulness as he should dread the devil: but it is nothing short of satanic delusion to believe that dulness and righteousness are inseverable. We have lived too long under the tyranny of that belief. Away with it. Can anything be duller than unrighteousness? more stale than immorality? more tedious than profanity? more ineffably wearisome than the eternal folly of the eternal fool?

The heart of the world, which is truly the heart of humanity, is weary of the dulness and dreariness of sin; weary of lust, of dishonour, of avarice, of hate; weary, too, of buffoonery, of endless quip and crank, of endless gibe and jest, of the perpetual laughter that is as mad as hollow—it saith truly: "What doeth it?"

The heart of the world is crying out for Love and Truth and Purity and Strength. Everywhere light is breaking. Everywhere the gleaming of pure ideals parts the fog of earthliness that enwraps us. Everywhere eyes are raised

from the swamps of materiality to the Heavenly Heights. Every day brings nearer the greater days—when, in dedication of all Art at the altar of Good and not of Evil, in the devotion of the universal offices of Poetry, Music, Song, Speech, in the consecration of Genius to the service of Our Lord Jesus Christ and not to Apollyon, shall be fulfilled in part the prophecy of the Vision, shall be seen in part the Golden City of the Heaven already “within us,” to which the Kings of the Earth shall bring their glory and their honour.



How Harry Won the Victoria Cross ;

OR,

THE BATTLE OF ABU KLEA.

There is a deathless interest bound up indissolubly with each and every detail of the Gordon Campaign ; and to read, in the light of after years, the wonderful story of the desert march to Gubat, and of the ascent of the Blue Nile, as told in the soldierly little journal of Colonel Sir Charles Wilson, entitled " From Korti to Khartum " is, and will ever be, an absorbing occupation for a thoughtful hour.

The bluff language of the royal engineer paints the scenes with a vivid brush. As you read you march with the men. You endure the caprice of the ever-varying climate, the breathless heat of day, the hurricane at midnight, the bitter ice of dawn. The confused noises of the forced night-marching ring in your ears ; the camels tumble about in the darkness over the rough ground ; the loads fall off in the tall savas grass ; there are halts and delays, cries, oaths, shouts. You feel the weariness of the long interminable desert miles. The miseries of thirst oppress you ; the frantic craving of men and beasts for the black mud-water of Abu Halfa effects you in imagination until your own throat seems dry as gravel. And yet under it all, and through it all, as you turn page after page, beats the strong pulse of steadfast hearts pressing ever forward towards one passionately desired

goal; a fervour of fluctuating, of slowly-dying, hope, which makes that march across the Bayuda desert to the relief of Gordon the terrible and sorrowful thing it was.

There are other points of curious interest, too, in this diary of a minor war; amongst them the interest of finding casual mention made of names, then practically unknown, which have since stepped into the foreground of public notice.—To wit, this frank entry of January 12th, 1885, written at Jakdul:—

“Passed most of the afternoon with Kitchener, who had established himself in a cave on the side of the hill. He had caught several men carrying dates to the enemy, but had little news of any kind from the front. . . . He was very sore at the order I brought him to return to Korti with Stanley Clarke’s convoy.”

This incidental reference to the future Commander-in-Chief, to the man who fifteen years later was destined to achieve Omdurman, to plant the Royal Standard in the centre of Khartum, to retrieve the tarnished honour of England, to avenge the murder of Gordon, is not without a breath of romance, if not a touch of deliquescent humour.

Of the battle of Abu Klea itself, of the sudden massed rising of the Arabs, like the rising of the clans from the brushwood at Killiecrankie, of the formation of the British square, of the jamming of the Gardner gun, and the death of the naval officers round it, “disdaining to move from their post”; of the breaking of the square by the grand figure of the old Sheikh Musa, the Emir from Kordofan, who rode at the head of his wild hordes, holding a banner in one hand and a book of prayers in the other, of the fierce and bloody hand-to-hand conflict; the deaths of Burnaby, Gough, Carmichael: of the rally and recovery of the surprised English, and the final dearly-bought victory,—many splendid accounts have been given by many writers. In the version of it told by Jim’s wife the endeavour has been to draw together only the most salient features, which are summed up by

Colonel the Hon. R. Talbot, in the "Nineteenth Century" for January, 1886, in these terse words:—

"It was an Inkerman on a small scale; a soldier's battle; strength, determination, steadiness, and unflinching courage, could alone have stemmed the onslaught."

The prototype of "Harry," the one man who won the Victoria Cross that day, was a private soldier called Albert Smith, who won it for the reason, and in the manner, set forth.

The ballad is a sequel to "Harry," which appears in the first volume. It has been found that some audiences—notably such as gather week by week, or month by month, during parochial winter sessions—are interested in following the fortunes of Annie Hyde's eldest son through consecutive tales. In such cases the following ballads may be read aloud, or recited, in the following order:—"Harry," "How Harry Won the Victoria Cross," "How Harry Won his Wife," "Shot on Patrol," "My Daughter-in-law," "A Soldier's Son." Lantern slides, illustrating the Gordon Campaign of 1885-6, and the Boer and British war, often form an agreeable addition to the programme.

But a further word must be added anent this recitation.

There are those amongst us ready to believe that the old loyalty of man to master is extinct; that sympathy between plebeian and patrician is as dead as it was in old Rome in the days of the wicked Ten: those who are eager to affirm that the murder of an Empress in broad day-light on the public quay of a great city, the multiplied assassinations of Crowned Heads and Presidents, point not so much to the secret working of a small Anarchical section of the community as to the fact that class-hatred is rampant in Christendom, and that the days have departed in which stories similar to this one told by Harry's mother can be received with favour even by the English lower or middle classes. These beliefs and affirmations are crooked and pessimistic, and the reciter need not be disconcerted by them. The sentiment of

class loyalty lies very deep down amongst the holiest emotions of our complex nature, and an appeal to it, through the medium of the narration of a true and gallant deed, will never be made in vain to English sympathies.

Whenever it is possible (as for example, at the gatherings organised in Mission Halls by the Clergy, in many parishes, under the name of P.S.E.'s, Pleasant Sunday Evenings, or at meetings arranged by the Nonconformists, under the kindred title of P.S.A.'s, Pleasant Sunday Afternoons), it is earnestly desired—should this ballad be chosen for recitation—that the thirteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans be read before it. So long as that noble exhortation, the Divine basis of Law, of Social Order, of Social Government, stands in the Bible (and it shall stand for ever!) so long Class-hatred, Anarchy, and the evil extreme of non-Christian Socialism will never make any real headway amongst us.

How Harry Won the Victoria Cross;

OR,

THE BATTLE OF ABU KLEA.



BEFORE I tell you the story of what Harry did at
the war,

I must carry back to something that happened
years before.

* * * * *

Me and my brothers and sisters were country born and
bred,

“Better a field than a city,” our mother always said.

There were fields all round our cottage. And through the
wood was the hall,

Where old Squire Lawrence lived, wi’ thirty horses in stall,

And the best prize cows in the county. Fond of his dogs
and his sport,

Always his hand in his pocket for trouble of any sort.

Always in Church o’ Sundays, let it blow, or hail, or rain !

And mother she made us curtsy when we met him in the
lane.

They wouldn’t do that in our buildings. Oh, no ! The
folks round me,

Bless you ! they’re as important as any Squire could be.

There's a man called Jobbs at our corner, who's shifty
with his scales,

I've heard him saying often he's as good as the Prince of
Wales !

And I'm sure I hope he may be. Though I doubt it—for
all his airs—

For only last week he was summoned for knocking his wife
downstairs !

But mother she read in the Bible, "Honour to whom
honour is due,"

And that was her way of thinking, and it's my way of
thinking, too.

There was never a finer lady than old Squire Lawrence's
wife,

And when my father lay dying, by the mill where he'd
worked in life,

She came through the wood to mother, and she nursed him
like a friend.

(You couldn't get nurses in those days even if you'd the
money to spend.)

All through the night they watched him, she and my
mother alone,

Hearing the wind a wailing, and hearing the mill-sails
moan.

And in the grey of the morning mother rose up from her
dead,

And turned to the Squire's lady who was kneeling by the
bed—

She could speak like a lady herself, could mother—
"Madam," says she,

"I am poor. I can never repay you, for what you have done for me.

But though I can never repay you, I pray to God that the debt

May be paid by my children's children to those your sons beget."

That's what she said. It was strange like. But mother spoke strange at times.

And old Squire Lawrence died, and they buried him under the limes,

By the chancel wall. And his lady, she died and was buried too.

And their eldest son was Squire, and lived where they used to do.

Mother was took before sixty, but saw me married to Jim.

And saw her grandson, Harry, and was wonderful proud of him!

Had him down to her village out of our London air,

And my son and the son of young Squire played in the meadows there.

Nothing to choose between them, for the boys were boys at nine.

They'd both have swopped a fortune for a top! and a piece of twine!

Young Master Guy thrashed Harry. And Harry thrashed him back!

Till they made it up with bird's eggs! and fishing round for jack!

Then their paths in life went different. And years passed us wondrous quick.

Harry shot up like a hop-pole. You never saw such a stick!

Oh! but he filled out, handsome! And we were proud of our son

When he 'listed for a soldier. He'd always wished to be one.

The regiment sailed for Egypt, to fight its way to Khartoum—

For 'twas back in the time when Gordon was at bay in his living tomb—

I remember the very first letter that Harry wrote to me.

They might have been playing football! "We're as merry as herrings," says he.

That's how our men face danger! That's how they take their share

Of hardship, heat, dust of the desert, foul water, and pestilent air.

God bless the brave hearts in their bodies! "And Mother," he wrote—"here's fun!

Who do you think is my officer? Master Guy! our own Squire's son!"

And funny enough! but it was so! And side by side they fought

From Korti up to Gubat. (I can't give the names as I ought,

But I know them when Jim's a reading!) And officer and man

They faced red death together in the wilds of the Soudan.

For this was how it happened.

Our tired men had marched

Through *eighty* miles of desert, fevered by thirst, and
parched ;

And as they got near water, by the banners they could see
That Arab hosts were holding the Wells of Abu Klea.

And by the Wells they fought them.

Our men were formed in Square,
All of them, lifeguards, gunners, infantry, marshalled fair,
And the camels in the middle. The great Square moved
like a wall.

And the enemy charged it, reckless, and never shook it at all.

They came in clouds, in thousands, and our bayonets drove
them back.

And again and again in fury they rushed to the attack,
Till at last our Quick Firer . . . jammed ! . . . and the
cavalry line grew thin . . .

And the Arabs dashed at the corner . . . and broke the
Square . . . and got in !

No battle of range and distance, that battle of Abu Klea,
With a far-away dot to tell you where your enemy may be.
It was cut and thrust at close quarters, blade to blade, man
to man,

Our swords and sabres clashing on the steel of Kordofan.

Savage for blood were the Arabs, uttering yell upon yell,
And they stabbed on the ground at the wounded like devils
out of Hell.

Aye ! *And that's war.* And young Lawrence, he lay there
upon the ground,

Unhorsed, and shot in the shoulder, with a dozen yelling
round.

He—the beloved of his mother—the heir of the Hall—and
his life

Wasn't worth the snuff of a candle ! for an Arab's gleaming
knife

Was an inch from his throat, when Harry—with a hand-
spike in his hand—

Sprang at the man like a leopard and dashed him dead on
the sand.

And over his officer's body at Abu Klea that day
He fought like the Angel of Battle, keeping the bloodhounds
at bay.

Fought with the spears at his breast, fought with the blood
on his face,

Our son risking his life for the son of the old Squire's race.

And why the boy lived—I can't tell you. Why he wasn't
slain—I don't know.

Speared and pinned like a sand-fly—except that God willed
it so.

But he stemmed that tide of slaughter till help came up
with a shout,

And the great Square rallied . . . recovered . . . and
hurled its enemy out !

Bleeding and fainting they found him, when the English
had cheered themselves hoarse,

But he saved the life of young Lawrence, and won the
Victoria Cross !

* * * *

There's a picture I've got of my mother that hangs on
our kitchen wall.

It wasn't done by an artist you've ever heard of at all :
For he only painted sign-boards, and advertisement-boards,
and such,
But she couldn't be painted better if we'd paid him ever so
much.

She sits in her chair that natural, she almost seems to
speak :

With her sweet eyes gazing tender, and her hand against
her cheek.

And the very self-same evening the news came home to me
Of the struggle in the desert by the Wells of Abu Klea.

I stood before her picture and looked in my mother's face—
“Mother !” I said— “he saved him ! The heir of the noble
race

You taught us to honour : 'twas Harry—the babe I laid on
your knees.

He fought and he saved him ! Mother ——”

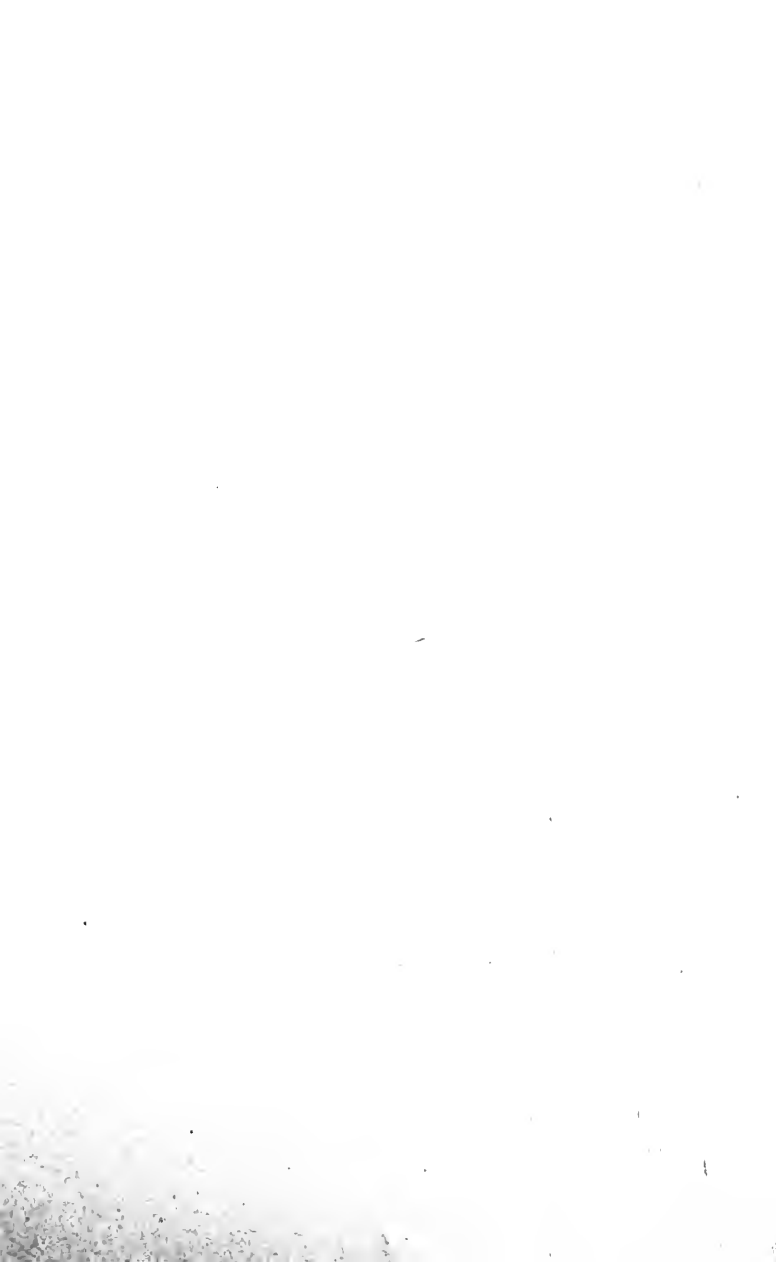
And friends, you may
think as you please.

You may say it was nothing but fancy, but as surely as I'm
her child,

As I looked at her face in the firelight the eyes of my
mother smiled.

And I heard her saying solemn : I heard ! . . . and I was
not afraid. . . .

“*By the hand of my children's children, thank God, has the debt
been paid.*”



A Week-day Saint.

The details of the story of "A Week-day Saint" which have been strictly adhered to, in almost every particular, were given to the Author by a friend—the wife of a clergyman who was Headmaster of a noted School. The original of Mrs. Coles lived as cook in their service. The story made a deep impression upon the Author at first hearing. Later on she heard it re-told by the present Bishop of Stepney, Dr. C. G. Laing (then Dean of Divinity at Magdalen College, Oxford)—during the course of an address delivered to the members of a Branch of the Mothers' Union, wives of College servants, at a Service held one quiet afternoon in the beautiful Ante-Chapel at Magdalen. His earnest enforcement of the facts, of the preciousness of this woman's life and death, the busy, bustling, common life; the sudden, terrible, common death; the one lived so faithfully, the other met so magnificently, rivetted the impression made, and compelled the Author to write the ballad.

Saintliness in the Middle Ages was sought for behind Convent walls, and within the cells of Monasteries; in the Twentieth Century it walks further afield, and makes its holy influence felt in the open market-place; yet in no era has Saintliness ever been intimately associated with kitchens, and to find it there, showing in fullest and fairest beauty, is to perceive anew the broadness of the bond of our spiritual brotherhood, the spiritual freedom which bears us far beyond the barriers of class distinction, wisely ordained for time and place, into the confraternity of Faith in Christ, wherein is neither Jew nor Greek, nor bond nor free.



A Week-day Saint.



WE were talking of Saints one Sunday,
Jim and the children and me ;
For Dickie had noticed the Saints' days
Down in the Prayer-book, you see.

And that boy ! he takes to questions as a cab-horse takes
to beans !

He's for everlasting asking what this and the other means !

And I told them then a story

Of a woman I used to know,

Who I think was fit to be counted

With the Saints of long ago :

Though she just was no one and nothing, but lived her
plain life out

In the common ruck of people you never think twice about.

The Saints bore pain without murmuring.

They bore, for the dear Lord's sake,

Life's trials with a calmness

That nothing seemed to shake.

They were ready to lay their lives down whenever the
Master bid,

Without a flinch or a falter. And that's what this woman
did.

When I was a girl in service,
The first place that I took
Was kitchen-maid at a Parson's,
And a Mrs. Coles—was cook.
She'd a home in the town, and two children : but her
husband was lamed by a fall,
And couldn't earn but a trifle, and so she worked for
them all.

Handsome, she was, to look at,
And ruled her kitchen firm.
Seventy mouths she cooked for
Every day in the Term :
For master had the school-house : and in a great house like
that,
The cook don't sit down easy and fold her hands for a chat.

Early and late she was working,
And kept us on the run.
But she loved her work : and she did it
As well as it could be done.
She did her duty faithful by all that passed her hand,
And you couldn't say more for a lady ! or the highest in
the land !

She taught me to toss a pancake,
And she taught me to make a stew,
And she taught me to boil a potato !
Which every woman can't do !
And I never knew her scold me : though I reckon she'd
cause to rate :
For I was a careless young monkey as ever broke a plate !

Well. Let me tell the story.

She was working and going along,
Just as I'd always known her,

Bustling, and busy, and strong ;

And one day she says to me—"Annie! I've a pain like a
knife in my breast,"

And I says—"Rub in some goose-grease, and sit you down
for a rest."

That's what I said. Ah! it's nothing

We know of what's going to be.

Just a little while later we waited,

The mistress herself, and me,

By her side to hear the verdict the surgeons had to give.

And they came and told her, quiet, *she had only three weeks
to live.*

Oh we know men fall in battle,

And scarcely dread, or feel,

In the fury of the fighting,

The thrust of naked steel.

They face death every moment, and their spirits are gay
and bold.

But it's one thing to die in hot blood, and another to die
in cold.

It's one thing to die unconscious :

Mere clay, that is deaf and dumb :

It's another to die in your senses,

Well knowing the end has come :

To meet it with faith so tranquil it's more Christ's faith
than man's!

You don't look for that in a kitchen, somehow, among the
pots and pans.

I'd thought of her as the cook, mind,

Who'd set me to scour a tin.

I didn't know I'd been living

With a Saint and a Heroine!

But I had! She looked at the doctors. "God's will be
done," says she.

And she walked into the hospital, bravely and steadily.

No soldier answered quicker

His Leader's call in the strife,

Than she the call which reached her

In the very prime of life.

Her work, her home, her husband, the friends she had in
our town,

She laid them all from her as calm-like as I'd lay a dish-
cloth down.

She said good-bye to us, cheerful.

And held her husband's hand.

"Tom, dear," she says. "It's sudden.

And hard to understand.

I'd *liked* to have lived a bit longer till the boys could earn
their bread.

But what's dark to us is light to God. And He knows
best," she said.

And through the days that followed,

Black days of mortal pain,

She never said anything different.

Never fretted for life again.

I was young, and scared of dying, and I asked her if she knew—

What it was like hereafter, and where she was going to?

“Annie,” she says, “I know nothin’

Of what it’s like at the end.

I only know for certain

I am goin’ to a friend.

I’ve known Him all my life,” she says; “and He’s with me in this Ward.

I’m naught, my dear, but a sinner: but He is Christ the Lord.

And He never failed a sinner

That asked Him to forgive.”

There’s a truth to nail on our souls, friends,

For as many years as we live.

She’d been speaking, oh! so simple. And she turned and smiled at me,

“You’re getting on with the cookin’. You keep it up!” says she.

And she died without a falter, or a flinch, or a thought to weep.

And her last words were—“He giveth . . . to His beloved . . . sleep!”

* * * * *

This isn’t a story for crying.

It’s a song! It’s a flag unfurled!

For the faith this woman died in

Is the light and the life of the world.

Thank God for the Saints of Sundays. And thank Him, thank Him, too,

For the week-day Saints who are living alongside me and you.



Lost.

For a Christmas merry-making, or charity concert, or cheerful social entertainment, this ballad was not written and will not be found appropriate ; but wherever the openly sinful, sorrowful, or despairing gather, within prison walls, behind refuge gates, in the darker haunts of our cities where criminals herd, haunts known to many and many a fighter in the ranks of our invincible Home Missionary Army—may the story of “Lost,” a weaving together of many living threads of fact, sometimes find an interpreter.

The key-note is to be found in the line :—

“ Oh glory to God for the Hope that girdles the whole world round.”

It is suggested that at any religious meeting where the ballad may be used, St. Luke xv. 10 to 32, should be read aloud to the audience either beforehand or after the recitation is over, and the speaker—using the tale of Dave the Lodger as a rude illustration—should strive to bring before his hearers the simple and yet tremendous teaching of the Parable—the uselessness of sin, the worth of restored self-respect, the possibilities of clean and honourable living lying within reach of the blackest and most degraded—all the shining treasures of ineffable Love and immortal Hope gleaming within that golden fragment of Holy Writ.

Could the world receive it, the world needs no other proof of the divinity of its Saviour than the one unspeakable story of the Prodigal Son. And though familiarity may have dulled perception of its unearthly beauty, yet let the speaker throw heart and soul into the application of its message. Except those who listen realize the power of the Parable, the ballad of “Lost” is profitless.



Lost.



YOU have listened to many a story told of a ship-
wrecked man,
Cast on a desert Island where the painted savages
ran,
And the monkeys climbed and chattered : cast there, and
lost for years.
And you've listened, may be, to ballads, that have filled
your eyes with tears,
Of women and little children lost in the sand, or the snow :
Lost on the sea, when the vessel struck on the reefs below.
And the losing of our poor bodies is tragic enough, God
knows !
But there are other stories, stranger, wilder, than those.
Tales of *souls* that are lost. And I come to you this time
With the truth of one such story. A tale of sin and crime,
But one of the most wonderful that ever was told in rhyme.

* * * * *

'Twas after Jim had the fever. We were dreadful poor
for a spell.
For there was a bill at the Baker's, and arrears of rent as
well.
And me and Jim, we've a feeling that debt is a sort of sin !
So to help us through the trouble we took a lodger in.
Dave he was called, or Davey. I didn't like his eyes.

They used to make me fancy he'd be good at telling lies.
He never looked you straight in the face, and always shuffled
his feet :

Though a bigger-made man than he was you couldn't pass
in the street.

He told us he was an orphan : that he hadn't a human tie
In the world : and that, at starting, was a regular, down-
right lie !

For we found, a long time after, his parents were both alive !
And his wife !—whom he'd deserted—and a son ! of four or
five.

He never went to Chapel, nor to Church with Jim and me.
“Why don't you come ? It's lovely !” I says to him
pleasantly.

He turned and swore. *He* comin' ! He'd as lief be hung or
be shot

As sit in a place o' Worship and listen to Parson's rot.
Devil have this and the other ! Did I take him for a saint ?
“Well, no,” I says, “I didn't ! But,” I says, “if you
aint,

Nor more am I : and maybe, you'll like it when you're
there.”

But he wasn't one for preaching : nor for Bible : nor
for prayer.

And it made me think of demons to see him about the place,
With his hang-dog eyes, and his shuffles, and his evil-
looking face.

Once he fell ill and I nursed him. Well, I take no praise
for that.

It was nothing but my duty, and I'd nurse a dog or a cat
That was under my roof, and ailing—but when he was up
again,

He never so much as said "Thank you," though he knew
I'd had a strain

To get him little comforts ; for at that time we were bent
On saving every penny we could scrape towards the rent.

As long as there's back-rent owing you can't call your
soul your own.

That's how I felt about it. And it wasn't my feel alone,
For we felt it all together. The children says to me—

"Mother, we don't mind having no sugar in our tea,
And that will save a little !" And Jim he says, says he—
"I'll stop my beer and baccy till this blessed debt is
through."

And I says—"Well, I'm shabby!—but not a stitch that's
new

Will I wear . . . till we've paid it." And so our savings
grew

Till in my old cracked tea-pot I'd got the whole round sum,
And felt that happy-hearted I could have played the drum !

The Monday I meant to pay it—it was three o'clock
about—

I reached me down the tea-pot to count the money out.
I'd a sovereign on the table, Jim gave me Saturday night—
And as I stood there, counting, to see that all was right,
I heard the door shut softly, and turned my head to see,
And there was Dave, our lodger, standing up close to me.

Friends ! it's a fearful moment when a soul beneath this
sun

Stands face to face, on a sudden, with the power of the
Evil One.

The Devil was in that man. And looked at me out of his
eyes.

I knew he had come to rob me. And quick as the lightning
flies

I knew that I couldn't stop him! There was none in the
house but me.

The children away at school, and Jim at the factory.

"Quick!" he says, "Give me the money! If you move,
or lift your hand,

Or speak above a whisper, I'll brain you where you stand."

I didn't move, but I faced him—"Dave!" I says, "I've
no fear,

I'm not a going to struggle or scream, for there's none
to hear.

You can rob us of our savings. You! that have shared our
bread.

But as sure as a God of Justice is watching overhead

You will take a *curse* with this money that will follow you
into Hell . . ."

And I said no more, for he struck me: a murderous
blow, and I fell

Straight down at his feet like a dead thing, and remembered
nothing more

Till Jim came in at tea-time and lifted me from the floor.

I was ill for a long time after, with the blow, and the shock,
and the pain,

And the sickness of heart at thinking we must save all over
again.

For he'd robbed us of every sixpence, and cleared right out
of the place,
And though the Police were a searching they never set eyes
on his face.

I've known bad men, and bad women, but never one worse
than him,
For, mind you, he'd been our lodger, living friendly with
me and Jim !

He'd known our shifts and our struggles. And yet he was
bad, that *bad*,

He could rob poor folks as we were of the little that we had !

Well. The full years went over—nine of them, one
by one,

Jimmy was Foreman, and working as hard as he's always
done.

We were busy, and hearty, and happy. And I'd ceased to
give a thought

To Davey and his doings, or to wonder if he'd been caught.

The summer was stifling sultry, and one night I pushed
my chair

Beside the open window, to get a breath of air.

And as I sat there, dreamy, for a minute in the heat—

The face of the man who had robbed me rose out of the
dark of the street.

Only a moment I saw it !—pale !—like a face from the grave.
A moment it stared in my eyes, and was gone ! But I
knew it was Dave.

And on the impulse I started, and screamed to the others,
and ran . . .

And found him lying across our step like a drunken man.

Not drunk. He had fainted. And Jimmy, he lifted and carried him in.

Oh! it's the truth in the Bible that hard is the service of sin.

We didn't need words to tell us, as we stood by our enemy, That he'd done more harm to himself by his crimes than he'd done to we.

The man was a ghost to look on! a wreck! a half-starved hound!

We had to fetch the doctor before we could bring him round.

I sent the others to bed, and through the hush and the gloom

Of that live-long night I watched him, in our little sitting-room.

Just after midnight he spoke to me, raising a heavy lid—"You here! . . . I meant to kill you that day . . ." "Yes, I know you did."

"Listen!" he says! "I *must* speak —." And oh! may there never be

In my ears again a voice of such desperate misery.

"I took a curse with that money . . . you said I should . . . you was right.

It's dragged, it's hunted me down, it's followed me, day an' night.

You wasn't the last I robbed. I'm dyin'. . . . I knows it well . . .

And I'm lost . . . And that CURSE you spoke of, *will* follow me . . . into Hell!"

Friends! It's not given to many who draw our mortal breath,

To hear a lost soul wailing on the very edge of death.
 Thank God, it was given to me! Thank God as I saw him
 there,
 Bad as he'd been, thief—outcast—in the last gasp of
 despair—
 There rushed on my soul the message Christ brought to
 wrecks like him.
 And the glory of that message thrilled me through every
 limb!
 It seemed as if an Angel lifted a golden rod
 And showed me the Hope, and Pity, that rolls through the
 Word of God!

Lost! But the *lost* may be *found*! Christ's truth!
 I knelt down on the floor.
 "Dave, you were lost, but you're found—found—rescued
 for evermore.
 It's the truth of the blessed Gospel—I can show you
 chapter and verse—
 The Lord whom you have forgotten will take away the curse.
 I know you are black: but never was a man, or a woman,
 so vile
 That the blood of the Lord couldn't cleanse them. Oh
 Dave!"—and I couldn't but smile—
 "You've nothing to say but—'*Forgive me! . . . I'm sorry!*
 . . . *I've sinned!*' and at last
 The love of the Father can reach you, and blot out your
 wretched past.
 When the wicked man turns to his God—it is writ in the
 Bible plain—
 The sins which he hath committed shall not be mentioned
 again!"

"Nothing to say but . . . *forgive me!*"

It seemed too much to be true.

He stared at me unbelieving.

"And can you forgive me? You!

That I robbed . . . and struck?" "Forgive you! Poor soul," I says, "I do.

If forgiveness of mine will show you the forgiveness of God more clear,

I'll forgive you every day and every night in the year!"

Oh friends! The wonder of it! I looked and I saw on his face

A look there must be on the faces of those in the Happy Place.

It came in a blaze to him! Pardon! Hope! Mercy! for him—the defiled!

He'd not shed a tear for thirty year, but he sobbed like a little child.

He didn't die. He recovered. He was granted another span

Of life in this world, was Davey. And he lived it—an altered man.

I could show you a little cottage, to-day, in a Surrey lane,
Where the clematis and roses climb round the window pane,

And the birds sing in the summer. A man lives there, with his wife,

And his son—whom he'd deserted:—and he's living an honest life.

That's him! That's Dave! They're happy. He's working at a trade.

And he looks you full in the face now : eyes steady, and
straight as a blade.

We were friends, all friends together, in London, before
they went.

And he's paid us back that money. Every penny ! every
cent !

O Glory to God for the Hope that girdles the whole world
round.

The sinner may be forgiven. And the lost, the LOST—
can be Found !

In Flower Alley.



HIS is a little story,
Of nothing . . . you may say.
Yet it filled my heart with sunshine
One dull, dark winter day.

And if it cheers another who is sad, as I was then,
It's worth my while to tell it, to women—or to men !

* * * * *

I'd done a deal of fretting :
For when your husband's ill
And in Hospital, it damps you !
Try and take it how you will.

A lady gave me sewing. She was *very* good to me.
But the day I took the work home, I was low as low
could be.

We were living in Flower Alley
(That hadn't a flower to show !)
And the fog hung cold as grave-clothes.
And though it's years ago,

I can feel its chill upon me as I hurried down the street,
Knowing I'd left my children with scarce a crumb to eat.

I was worrying about them
When I reached the lady's door.

'Twas a splendid house she lived in.

I hadn't been there before.

I was asked to wait in a passage : and I sat me down in a chair,

With a sort of arch before me—as it might be, over there !

And through the arch was a staircase,

All flooded in golden light.

And as I sat there, waiting,

I saw the prettiest sight

You ever could imagine. Three children came down the stairs.

I've seen cherub heads in pictures, but never none sweeter than theirs.

Such darling rosy faces !

Such hair ! all wave and shine.

All dresses of lace and velvet,

So rich ! and dainty ! and fine !

Three. Just the same as my children ! A girl and two little boys.

Laughing . . . and stepping careful . . . with their arms full of lovely toys.

The little girl held a dolly,

As big as herself, very near !

And a boy just the size of Harry,

Had a helmet ! and sword ! and spear !

And the other boy had a trumpet ! and a Noah's Ark ! and a drum !

"Let us go and show them to mother !"—they said, as I watched them come.

And they passed down the great wide
staircase,

All three! And I saw them no more.

Though the chime of their happy laughter
Followed me out at the door.

It's pleasant now to recall it. But *that* day, in my distress,
It filled my breast with a passion of envy and bitterness.

For I thought of my wretched young ones

Waiting for me in the gloom,

By the farthing dip, where I'd left them

In our poor living-room.

Tired: and maybe, crying: in the dreary evening shades.

And the laughter of those rich children stabbed me like
dagger blades.

I'd never coveted money,

But I grudged and coveted then.

It made me mad to be thinking,

That the children of working-men,

Were to have life's tears and sadness, and the others have
all the joys.

"It's easy for *them* to be laughing, with their clothes, and
their beautiful toys!"

Thinks I, as I reached our Alley,

Squalid, and dismal, and wet.

And trailed up our steps, and stood . . .

rooted!

By a sound I shall never forget.

Peals of the merriest laughter that ever rang out on the air!

Peal after peal! Sweet as music! . . . where did it come
from? Where?

Never from my poor children !

I gasped . . . and I opened the door . . .

There were my three youngsters,

Sitting down on the floor.

Sitting and shouting together, in the guttering candle flame,
Laughing their little heads off, over some wonderful game.

There they were. POOR OF THE POOREST.

Bubbling with laughter and fun!

“Let’s go an’ show ’em to mother,” says

Dickie,

Just as the rich ones had done !

And they brought me their toys and treasures . . . Some
bits of orange peel !

And bits of a broken tea-pot ! And an empty cotton-reel !

And an oyster shell ! And a hairpin !

And an old boot, burst to shreds ! . . .

They were playing at shop, they told me.

Oh blessings on their young heads !

They didn’t know why I was crying : why I kissed them so
warm and fast.

But the fog had turned to sunshine, and my bitterness was
past.

* * * * *

Friends ! the world worships money,

And sells for it Peace and Health.

But Happiness, thank Heaven,

Has nothing to do with wealth.

It's God's free gift, like summer,
For the rich, and the poor, to find.
And all the money that's minted
Won't buy a contented mind !

And all the money that's minted will never hold or sway
The happy-hearted laughter where little children play.

Beachy Head.

This is a true story.

The principal facts can be read to-day in back sheaves of the *Daily Telegraph* for August, 1900, under the heading—"Exciting Rescue."

Much that is heart-stirring, romantic, terrible, has been associated in the history of our Coast with the wild white bluff that gazes seaward from the South Downs. Ever since the days when wreckers skulked along shore from Birling Gap, when Sussex smugglers—notorious for lawlessness—landed at Crow Link, when many a Corsair, Privateer, and ship of doubtful flag, ended her eventful voyaging on the rocks between Langney Point and Seaford Head; ever since those days, and long before them, tales have been told, and records kept, of famous wrecks and mighty gales, of battles with the sea, of fights upon the beach, of climbers who have dared the Pinnacle, the Devil's Chimney, and won their lance-like summits; of climbers who have dared and failed! and whose dead bodies have lain piteous on the unregarding shingle far below. But strangely few tales have been told, and scarcely a shred of record has been kept, of the grand rescue of life and limb made again and again by our Coastguardmen on Beachy Head.

Eastbourne herself, whose crown of beauty is the head, has apparently preserved no authoritative chronicle of these splendid deeds—deeds which are the glory, not only of the South Downs, but of the whole country; and the official archives of the Coastguard Station yield scanty information. It is on record that one William Feast, Coastguard, received some years back the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, for his success in saving

life on Beachy Head. But William Feast is dead, and the story of his courage has died with him, inasmuch as no written memorial of it survives.

As one ponders these things one realises anew the part played from the beginning by bard, minstrel, poet, song-writer, and ballad-monger, in keeping aglow the fires of memory, in fanning to flame along the years the live embers of valiant exploits, which else would flicker and die out amongst the ashes of time.

It is, therefore, a joy and a labour of love to the Author, to try to preserve—albeit roughly—the story of one Rescue on Beachy Head, which cannot fail to impress others with wonder equal to her own. The spectacle of a man suspended by a rope upon the pathless front of the vast chalk wall, deliberately relinquishing even this frail anchorage in order the better to liberate his limbs, and risk his life in the effort to save life, so aroused the Author's amazement and admiration, that she was not satisfied until she had journeyed to the Head, and had seen in the flesh, Myles Mahoney, the living prototype of the Coast-guard of the ballad.

The difficulty in extracting from his unwilling lips the details of the Rescue was considerable, as he minimised—with a brave man's modesty—the part he had played in it himself, and reiterated repeatedly—what is superbly true—that each one of his comrades at the station could have done as he did, and would have so done, had they been in his place.

Four men assisted at the Rescue of August 14th, 1900, under command of Chief Officer Clancy, since stationed at Gosport. Through the courtesy of Chief Officer Hennings, the Author is glad to have this opportunity of recording their names :—

Myles Mahoney.

William Martin.

George Soanes.

Ethelbert Richardson.

William Martin's feat was, indeed, scarcely less astonishing than that of Mahoney, and should not be passed over.

When Mahoney had reached the boy, had succeeded in tying a rope round his almost insensible body, and round his own body, and had sent the hoisting signal to the summit, it was discovered that the rope had caught on a projection of rock and was unworkable! Martin, without a moment's hesitation, slowly crawled out along a crumbling knife-like ridge that cut the air many hundred feet above the sea, and at imminent peril of his neck—freed the rope!

It is pleasant to hear that owing to the kind efforts of the Rev. Herbert Alston, of Eastbourne, and the instrumentality of the *Gazette* newspaper, some recognition of the bravery of these men was made at the time. The sum of £18 was raised by subscription, and, according to Coastguard etiquette, divided equally amongst the members of the Station Force.

"A splendid-looking Coastguard!" says Annie Hyde, and Mahoney deserves the encomium. The Author and her friends will not soon forget his stalwart physique and clear eyes, described afterwards by an Oxford "Blue" as "the most fearless eyes he had ever seen."

He is married. His little home at the Station, characterised by Service neatness, and smartness, was visited, and a glimpse caught of his young wife, and sweet little daughter.

Though justly and proudly reckoned amongst the Sons of Britain, Myles Mahoney is—as his name implies—an Irishman. His mother was living in his native county, County Kerry, in the spring of 1902. He has served under his country's flag in both services, having been at one time a soldier in the Sussex Regiment: the hard-fighting regiment, it will be remembered, which manned the Nile steamers, "Bordein" and "Talahawiyeh," ascended the cataracts, and ran the blockade of withering fire up to the walls of Khartum, only to find that the besieged city had fallen into the Mahdi's hands. Mahoney holds the Egyptian

medal, and the Star of the Khedive : bears an exemplary character, and is a teetotaler. The Reciter will do well after delivering the ballad, to bring these combined facts before the audience. Many a hard-swearing, hard-drinking, evil-living ruffian, has exhibited brute courage, nerve, and daring, in the face of danger, thereby winning for himself the noble name of Hero ; but when a man adds to courage, nerve, and daring, the white record of an untarnished, God-fearing life, he is a Hero indeed !

“ Beachy Head ” may be easily shortened for recitation, when deemed necessary, by omitting those paragraphs which refer to Mullins ; but the Author pleads that this may not be done lightly, for in Annie Hyde’s line of argument lives the spirit which produces the type heroic. To paraphrase reverently the Words of Holy Writ : “ *Other foundation—of National greatness—can no man lay—in England—than that which is laid* ” : that which was laid in far-back days of stress and storm, when, as the Arthurian legend declares, in this wild Island of the Northern sea, the Pagan hordes were broken up, and the Rule of Christ began.

Beachy Head.



HERE are two ways of looking at most things :
a gloomy, and a bright.

And to always see the gloomy is neither wise nor
right.

And so I've said to Mullins, who would sit in our front room
And talk that dull and dreary he depressed you to the tomb !

"The country's going under," he says one day to me.

"We've boasted of our greatness and our Empire of the Sea !
But mark me, Mrs. Hyde," he says, "the country's doomed
to fall !"

"That's false !" I says, "Mr. Mullins. It isn't doomed
at all."

"Ah, there're wars, and rumours of wars," he says, "and
we shall go

The way Rome went before us." And he groans. And I
says—"No !

There may be wars to try us, but if we all stand true
To the Christian Faith we were reared in, the nation will
battle through.

If we're true to the Open Bible our forefathers died to gain,
The whole world shall rise up against us, and rise against
us in vain !

That's truth," I says, "Mr. Mullins." "Oh," says he,
with his face askew—

"But nobody reads the Bible." "Oh yes," I says, "they do.

There's millions and millions read it. We're not all, you know, like you !

And the Bible-reading millions are the salt of our land this day,

And the solid rock we're built on, no matter what you say. And wherever our flag has floated, over black or yellow skin, We have taken the Bible with us——" "Wrong!!" he snaps, "we've taken GIN!!"

That beat me for a minute. "Well," I says, "that is true.

We have taken the Living Gospel. And we've taken the Drink-trade too.

And that's SIN for which we must answer, rulers, and people, alike.

But though the Sword of Judgment may leap from its sheath—may strike—

If we turn to the Lord in earnest, and humble ourselves, and amend,

Great Britain's star will be shining more brightly in the end."

"There're a lot of ifs in your talkin'," says he with the frightfulest sneer.

"You needn't stand a chanting about Great Britain here.

The race is changed, it's corrupted, it's Ruined!" he says, "with Gold!

We've lost the pluck, the courage, we had in the days of old.

It's all Self-love, Self-interest. Manhood is on the shelf.

Men live for making Money"—(he'd made a good bit himself!)

"There used to be British heroes," he says, "*but they're dying out——*"

"Mr. Mullins!" I interrupts him, "You don't know what you're talking about.

You're the dismalest frog," I tells him, "that ever croaked in
a pond.

You sit with your head in a mud-heap, and you never look
beyond.

Why!" I says, "there are heroes walking, up and down
these Isles of ours—

If you'd only heart to know them—all the days and all the
hours!

There are noble deeds a doing, and acts of Charity,
And Love, and Help, and Tenderness, that the angels smile
to see.

Now come!" I says. "I can tell you of a British hero
straight.

Just a simple chap, a Coastguard, who never knew he was
great.

The tale was in our papers, as gallant as ever was read.
And *I* know it's true, Mr. Mullins. *I* know it's true," I said.
"For it happened to *us*! And I call it—The Story of
Beachy Head."

You know the famous headland that watches Eastbourne
town.

Have you ever climbed to the summit, and stood there, and
looked down,

Down, at the deep sea-water six hundred feet below?

If you have, I haven't. And wouldn't! If you paid me
ever so.

I can't look down from a height: for everything seems to
crawl,

And I go that dizzy and giddy, I feel I am going to fall.

And the day me and Jim and the children were up upon
Beachy Head,—

Though 'twas really the finest outing we'd had since we
were wed,—

Though we'd sausage-rolls in a basket, and a mutton pie,
and a tart—

And I'd trimmed up my old bonnet till it looked as smart as
smart !

Though the sun was shining lovely—the thought of that
fearful height,

And that deadly edge, and the children, and never a rail in
sight

To save them from falling over !—it so upset my mind,

“ Jim,” I says, “ where's the pleasure ? I wish that I'd
stayed behind.”

“ Mother,” he says, “ don't worry. There's nothing on earth
to fear ! ”

But I kept tight hold of Sally that *she* shouldn't go too near.
While the boys, little Dick, and Harry, they shouted and
ran and played,—

Each with the spade we had bought him—not the very least
bit afraid !

I tried my best to enjoy it, for the view was vast and wide,
We saw the great ships sailing far out on the ocean tide.

We saw the Coastguard station, and the flag-mast on the
grass.

I stood some minutes, watching, to see a sea-gull pass.

And a little longer, listening, to what the sky-larks said.

For oh ! they did sing sweetly up there on Beachy Head !

And when I turned . . . I can feel it . . . the horror that
caught my breath.

Jim was a running with Harry, their faces as pale as death.

And in a moment I guessed it . . . and the guessing turned
me sick . . .

“Dickie!” I shrieked to them . . . “Dickie! Where is he? *Where is Dick?*”

And my husband caught me . . . “Annie! . . .” his very lips were stiff.

“Annie,” he says, “we’ve lost him . . . he’s fallen over the cliff!”

O Lord in Heaven! My youngest! My curly-headed son!

We ran to the Coastguard station for help. And there was one,

A splendid-looking Coastguard, a sitting at his tea.

Married, he was, and a father, ’twas afterwards told to me.

He jumped up straight—I can see him—“Mates! Bring a rope!” says he.

He ran to the verge of the headland, and laid himself flat on the turf

And searched for a sign of Dickie, down, down, to the sand and the surf.

But nothing showed, or fluttered, or cried with a human tongue.

“Quick!” he says. “Lower me over!” And over the edge he was swung.

Over the terrible rampart, six hundred feet in height.

I couldn’t watch him swinging . . . I hid my eyes from the sight.

But Jim, he watched with the others: and caught a shout of joy—

A shout that rang up to the summit—“He’s alive! I can see the boy!”

Aye! He could see, but not reach him.

Friends! let me tell you, slow,

The facts of as brave a rescue as you will ever know.

The child had slid, and was standing, on a
ledge six inches wide,
Clinging for life to the bare chalk, dumb, helpless, and
terrified,
And sheer between him and rescue stretched two hundred
feet, or more,
Of the vast white cliff that rose upwards like a white wall
from the shore.
If the Coastguard's nerve had failed him, we had lost our
little son.
But the nerve of the man was iron! He saw what had to
be done.
He must cross to the boy!—though the crossing looked a
task beyond human hope.
Without a thought of the peril he slipped himself out of the
rope,
And quicker than I can tell it, he got off his boots and his
socks,
And clinging naked-footed to the face of those treacherous
rocks,
Striking his knife in the crannies and holding on to the
hilt!
Sometimes scraping a foothold where the least little slip or
tilt
Would have hurled him to destruction! swarming, crawling,
along,
From yard to yard of the distance, daring, and cool, and
strong,
Like a fly on a wall he crawled over! And the watchers
held their breath!
Knowing the man was playing at touch and go with Death!

Crawled between earth and heaven, while the sea-birds
screamed and fled

And the sea roared far below him—crawled across Beachy
Head!

Got to the boy and caught him! . . . at the very point to
drop . . .

And held him safe till the ropes came and drew them both
to the top!

Jim gave him his watch. 'Twas his father's. 'Twas all
he had to give.

I stood there . . . holding Dickie . . . And the longest day
I live

I can never tell my feelings. I shook like a shock of wheat.
“If I had the gold of the Indies I would pour it at your
feet.

You are married so they tell me . . . and home and child
are sweet . . .

And we're working-folk! We're strangers! Mere strangers
from London way . . .

And you've risked your life for my boy's life, that you never
saw till this day! . . .

Man!” I says. “Who was your mother? May she be
living to hear

That the son she bore is a Hero! . . .” “She's livin',” he
says, “never fear!

And a good mother too. But Lord love you! Don't call
me a hero!” says he.

“Every Jack o' my mates here standin' would have done it
as well as me,

And better maybe. Now young 'un,” and he patted Dickie's
head,

"No more of these *larks*!"—as I'm living that's what that Coastguard said!

And he handed the watch back to Jimmy, and says he, a flushing red,

"I'd as lief not keep it, Mister, thank you kindly all the same."

And was turning off to leave us, us, that didn't know his name!

And yet owed him a debt so mighty! so mighty! . . .

I burst into tears.

"Oh wait . . . we could never repay you though we tried for a hundred years.

But as sure as the prayers of a mother can call down a blessing from Heaven,

As I kneel by this child you have rescued that blessing to you will be given."

He turned round as simple as nothing!

"Now don't you take on," says he.

"'Twas in the day's work, and a pleasure. And I'm off now to *finish my tea*!"

I don't know what Mullins was thinking, but he gave a cough and a sneeze.

And wiped his eyes for a wonder. And sat as mum as you please.

"It's well," I said, "with the country that can breed such men as these!"

Thank God! for the hero spirit that lives where the British tread.

Thank God! for the brave hearts beating in the Coastguards of Beachy Head.

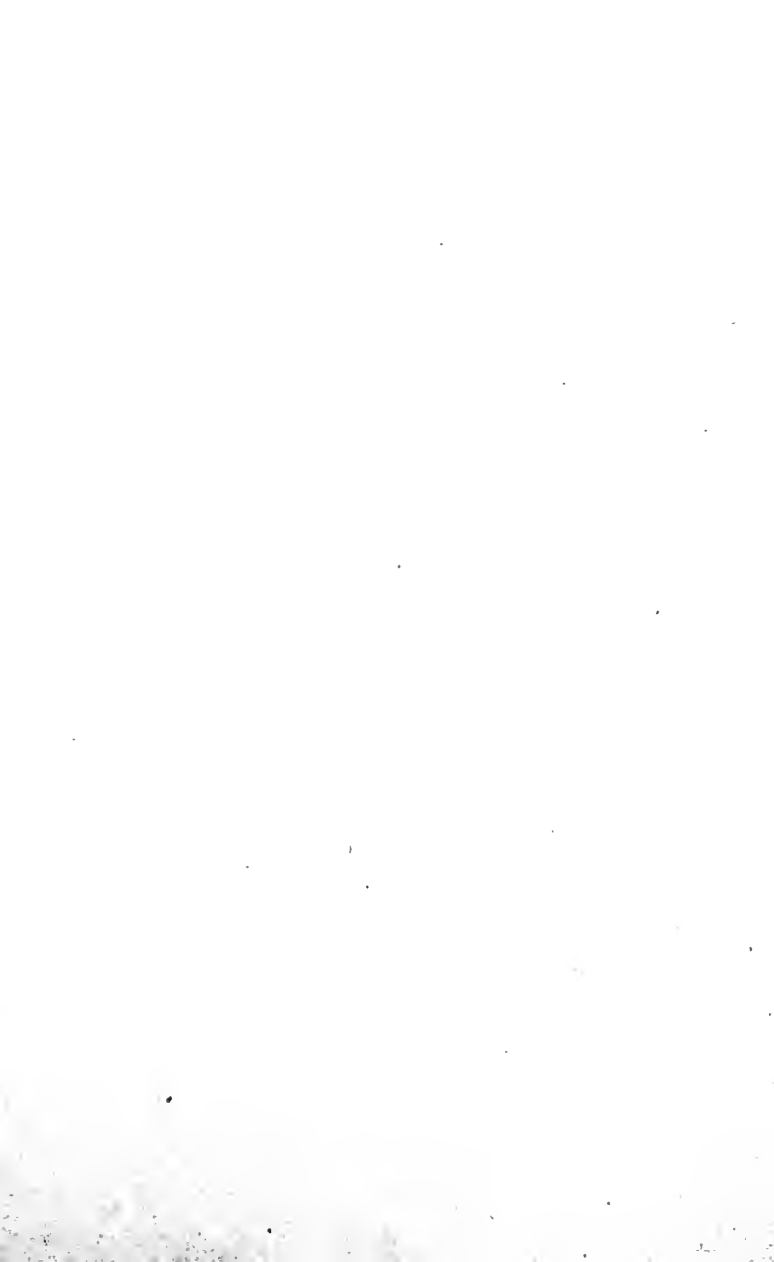
Shot on Patrol.

This ballad deals with a true incident which occurred during the early part of the Boer and British war. The treacherous ruse by which a patrol of English Lancers were led into an armed ambush, was recorded in the columns of the Press in December, 1899. On the 28th of that month a spirited article by the war correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, dated from Arundel, contains the following pertinent paragraphs:—

“Of the word ‘patrol,’ if you look it up in the dictionary, you will find a simple explanation: but the average Englishman at home has no idea of its real meaning as exhibited in warfare, especially war against an enemy like the Boer. It requires more courage, more real pluck, to patrol the kopjes round our camp, than to make a charge in company with thousands of your fellows in the teeth of a deadly fire. . . . And if you are shot, there is no glory attached to your memory. ‘So-and-So was shot while on patrol,’ a few simple words which convey a great deal, but only to the initiated.”

“The incidents of the last few weeks here prove that our men are not merely ‘show’ soldiers, but brave and daring to a fault, ready at any moment to risk their lives for a comrade in distress. . . . Let all Englishmen be proud of them. Some of their experiences have more than a suggestion of romance, and deserve to be placed on record to the lasting honour of those concerned.”

The Reciter will find that the effect of the recitation of “Shot on Patrol,” is much enhanced if it be immediately followed on the programme by a stirring patriotic song.



Shot on Patrol.



THE war is over and done with :
And the never-ending roar
Of our toiling life in London
Sweeps on as it did before.

But let no one say we've forgotten ! Our hearts are
throbbing yet,

And our eyes are dimmed with memories we never can forget.

I've reason to remember,

For I sent out a son.

Him that won the Queen's Cross in Egypt,

And stands over six-feet-one !

He was infantry when he 'listed, and he's served with the
cavalry since.

He's a Lancer Troop Sergeant Major, and his mother thinks
him—a Prince !

But it's not of Harry, exactly,

That this tale is going to be.

It's about his chum, his comrade,

A chap called Johnny Lee.

The men called him "Bones," and "Skinny," because he
was slight and thin,

And laughed at him for a Lancer, and said he'd been
smuggled in !

“Johnny” sounds softish, somehow.

And he was a bit soft, in a way.

He was pious-like, and quiet,

Didn't smoke, or joke, or play,

Or care for a lark off duty : though set him across a horse !

And not a man could ride better, or keep a straighter course.

Still while they were quartered in London,

He was just the butt of the troop !

They hid his belt, and his breeches !

And put mustard in his soup !

And played all the games you can fancy—till one day the
play got rough,

And Harry turned round in Barracks and said the boy'd had
enough.

“I'll break the neck of the bully

Who touches that lad again,”

He says. And the others dropped it,

For just to put it plain—

When a man's a V.C. and a giant, who can shake you out
limp and blue,

His comrades pay attention if he makes a remark or two !

And after that, young Johnny,

He worshipped him, very near.

And then came the news of Colenso . . .

Terrible news to hear !

Shall we ever forget Colenso ? The wires had flashed
“defeat.”

“Captur' o' British Cannon !” screamed the urchins down
our street.

And me and Jim sat staring,
And the neighbours gathered in.
And some said the Generals had blundered,
And some said war was a sin,
And we'd better give in, and surrender. And Mrs. Crump
says—"Oh!
You may take it the fighting's finished, and your boy wont
have to go,

And that will be a blessin' . . ."
She meant it sort of kind.
Jim laid his hand on the paper.
And I knew what was in his mind
By the tremble of his fingers. "Not go!" he says—"If
he stayed,
He'd be no son of ours. Give in! while a bullet or blade

Or man is left in the country.
Give in! when the war is just.
Never!" he says. "I'm no soldier
But fight I will, if I must,
And the Mother here would send me!"—"Aye! that
I would," says I—
And as we spoke . . . there stood Johnny . . . waiting to
say Goodbye!

Their orders had come down sudden.
"Don't cry!" he says to me.
"I love Harry like a brother.
I'll take care of him," says he.
"*I'll take care of him, I promise.*" And I smiled! for he
looked so small!
But how he kept the promise I'm going to tell you all.

One day of that African summer
A Lancer patrol went out,
In charge of Harry's Captain,
Just to leisurely look about
And search the little kopjes where the Dutchmen liked to
hide.
Harry was there, and Johnny, and four or five troopers
beside.

You may think the work sounds easy,
But it's not the pleasantest thing
In cold blood to *walk* your horses
Where every rock may ring
To the cracking of a rifle, where every bush may screen
Some of the surest marksmen the world has ever seen.

All at once, from a farm in the distance,
Waved a signal of distress.
They could tell 'twas a woman waving
Most-like a bit of her dress.
"It's a Boer woman in trouble," says Harry's Captain then,
"We must ride across to help her." And they went. Like
Englishmen.

I'm not here to judge our foemen.
We shall both be judged at God's Throne.
I prayed for the Boer widows,
Through the war, as I prayed for our own.
There was many a Boer as honest and straight as a man
can be.
But in this tale I'm telling was the foulest treachery.

Scarce had they reached the farmhouse,
When—hid by the stable shed—
Up sprang an ambush of thirty,
And poured out a volley of lead.
“Trapped!” shouts the Captain. “Get back, boys!” And
they wheeled and rode for their lives.
And the Boers swarmed after them, mounted, like a rush of
bees from the hives.

Five hundred yards at full gallop,
And the Captain’s horse fell dead.
Harry was back like a rocket—
“Up, Sir! behind me!” he said.
He’d have died to save his Captain—“Spring! Lay hold of
my belt!”
And a thousand yards, at full gallop, they thundered across
the veldt.

Down on the right dropped a trooper,
Shot through the heart, like a hare.
Down on the left dropped another—
And then, with a plunge in the air,
Harry’s charger rolled headlong, dead, with its double load,
And my boy and his Captain together *ran* on the open road.

Back to their aid swept two Lancers,
Marshall, and Johnny Lee—
Straight in the teeth of the fire
That followed them murderously.
Marshall took up the Captain. And Johnny—Johnny, took
up my son!
When Harry reeled down from the saddle! “They’ve got
me . . .” he says. “I’m done!”

Gallop ! and save yourself, Johnny . . . ”

The butt of the Troop stood still.

Unwounded, fleet horse, and bold rider,

And safety lay over the hill !

’Twas his life for a shake of his bridle ! But he leapt down
to Harry’s side—

“I can carry you into shelter . . . there’s a rock just
ahead . . . ” he cried,

And he strained and he struggled to do it,

And he hadn’t the strength for the weight . . .

“Shelter yourself, lad,” gasped Harry,

“Leave me . . . before it’s too late ! ”

“Never alive ! ” rang his answer. And the Boers came up
to the bend :

Like a young lion he faced them, standing over his
friend.

Three he brought down with his carbine . . .

And then he was shot to death . . .

Shielding his wounded comrade

To his last dying breath.

Greater love hath no man

Than this, the Scripture saith.

My son is living—*was living* . . . when they brought up the
ambulance cart :

Because the brave, broken body—of Johnny . . . lay over
his heart.

*

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Friends, though the war is over,

And the country is at rest.

When we hang the Cross "For Valour"

On the living hero's breast,

Remember the dead who earned it: where the hills of the
Transvaal roll :

And honour this deed of a Lancer who was "Shot while on
patrol."

A Sad Trade.

The ghastly tragedy in this ballad was enacted in Westminster in January, 1903. The initial circumstances are too pitifully common to need comment.

Exaggeration has been carefully avoided in the story throughout. Every fact brought forward by Annie Hyde can be substantiated at the mouth of abundant witnesses.

The Author ventures to earnestly commend the facts to the consideration of those readers, or hearers, upon whose shoulders may rest—in a greater or lesser degree—the mighty burden of the legislation of the country: and to the prayerful thought of those who in dealing with their Weaker fellows, either publicly or privately, must perforce sustain the solemn obligation laid upon the Strong.



A Sad Trade.



THE story I'm going to tell you, is truth from beginning to end.

It didn't come under my notice. It was told me by a friend,

A relation, the wife of my brother. And the saddest part that's true

Appeared in the Daily Papers, as dozens such stories do.

* * * * *

Thomas, my eldest brother—I don't mind who sits and hears—

Was coachman to Squire Lawrence for years and years and years.

A first-rate man was Thomas. And he married the Dairy-maid.

Yes: that he did: and he loved her, most true. And I'm not afraid

To say that a sweeter creature than Tom's wife, Rachel Dale,

Never set foot on the meadows, or looked at a milking pail!

Tom had saved a bit of money, and he took it out of a bag,

And put it into a Public, that was called 'The Lamb and Flag.'

I'd have called it 'The Net and Fishes,' or 'The Spider
and the Fly'—

Those are rare good names for Publics—but the Sign was
swinging high

Before Tom and Rachel went there. A Lamb with a Flag
of gold,

Glittering above the customers, most dazzling to behold !

It's a common thing for coachmen to enter the Liquor
Trade.

I don't know why, but it is so. And Tom and Rachel made
The very best of Landlords. Tom drove his trade along
As well as he'd driven horses. He was sober, and "straight,"
and *strong* !

And if a man got noisy, and started to swear and shout,
Tom went round very quiet, and simply—put him out !
He kept the Law as careful as any Policeman would.
And whether 'twas beer or spirits, all that he sold was good.
When I say "good" I mean . . . well . . . as good as it
ever is !

His landlord was the Brewer, and Thomas could say this—
To a finer-hearted gentleman you couldn't pay your rent !
He was all on the side of Temperance, and sat in
Parliament :

And passed the Act, and kept it, and no tenant of his would
dare

To serve a man on the Black List, any more than he'd fly
in air !

Yet Rachel often told me, that all about their way
The drinking was distressing. It grieved her, day by day,
To look into the faces of the poor, drink-sodden souls
Who came from courts and alleys, and drifted in, in shoals,

To all the Public-houses. Their Bar was clean and bright,
But the wrecks and dregs that filled it—say on a Saturday
night—

To a tender-hearted woman, were pitiful to see.

She got to know the people who came there frequently.

And amongst them was a couple she noticed above the
rest.

She found they were wife and husband: though that she
wouldn't have guessed,

As they never came in together. The man was a surly
lout,

And quarrelsome. And Thomas had had to put him out

Not once, or twice! she told me. The woman would slink
in, sly,

And suck down gin and whiskey, when nobody was by.

She was mother of seven children, and middle-aged, and
poor.

The man earned decent wages: but Rachel was certain sure
They wasted half on drinking.

One foggy winter day,
It chanced that Fred, the barman, and Tom, were both
away,

And Rachel took the serving. This woman comes creeping
in,

And asks in a husky whisper for two-pennyworth of gin.

And Rachel Dale leans over, and says she, in her pleasant
way,

“Let me make you a cup of cocoa, or tea. It's got more
stay

Than spirits. The kettle's boiling. Just come in as you
are!”

And into the cosy parlour she'd got behind the Bar,

She had her in half a twinkle !

“Now, Mrs. Hames,” says she,
A setting out the tea-cups, as cheerful as could be,
“You spend too much on spirits, and not enough on food.
I’ve watched you and your children. You’re doing yourself
no good.

Give it up ! and turn teetotal !” “My very heart and life !”
Gasps the woman. “Turn teetotal ! And you a Publican’s
wife !”

“A Publican’s wife I may be, but not,” says Rachel Dale,
“A Vampire sucking life-blood ! My husband sells his ale,
And has to make his profit. And I wish with all my soul,
That he was paid a salary, and got his money whole
And free from the sale of liquor :—but we sell drink, never-
theless,

For honest thirst, remember, and not for drunkenness.
We’ve got a heart and conscience ! Do you think I can see
you drift

Here at our Bar, to ruin, and never so much as lift
A hand to try and stop you !——”

And the woman was *so* upset,
And touched, and fair astounded, she cried her apron wet.
“It’s true,” she says a sobbing. “I’m doing myself no good.
I’d give it up to-morrow, if I could : if I *only* could !
But Oh ! the craving’s awful ! You don’t know what it is to
feel

The Public Houses drawing you, inside, with cords of steel.
If I didn’t pass them constant, and catch the smell of beer,
Maybe I’d lose the craving. But, Mrs. Dale, round here,
They seem to meet you all ways ! We live next door to you—
‘The Lamb and Flag.’ And behind us, we’ve got ‘The
Wooden Shoe,’

And 'The King's Head' at the corner. I can stand outside
our door
And count—'The Cape,' 'The Magpie,' 'The Crown,'
'The Plough,' that's four!
And you know there are others handy," *And Rachel knew it
well.*

She tried to help that woman. It's a funny thing to
tell
Of a Publican's wife—but she did this :—She went to a lady
near,
Who worked amongst the people. And for over half a year
They visited the Hameses, till they got them to sign the
Pledge.
Then to help them to keep steady, to drag them from the
edge
Of the Pit that's swallowed millions—they advised them,
for their good,
To take another lodging in a different neighbourhood.
And man and wife were willing. And they tried to find a
place
Where the open doors of Publics wouldn't stare them in the
face
At every turn and corner : a lodging near Hames' work,
And not above his rental . . . Friends ! I'm not going to
shirk
The facts . . . *They couldn't find one.* They couldn't find a
street
In the whole of that wide district—nor would they, I repeat,
In the length and breadth of London—a street where the
poor could bide,
Without a beershop, beckoning, on this or the other side !

And we call this Christian England ! For the sake of
gold, of gain,
We take our poor weak children, drink-cursed in body and
brain,
And we *swamp* them with Temptation ! We roll the barrels
down,
Till they sink in drink, like drenched flies, and we watch
them—while they drown !

But I mustn't talk in this way. I've got to
tell the tale.

The Hameses stayed, and struggled, till the sight and smell
of ale,
And stout, and rum, and whiskey, and everlasting gin,
Broke down their resolutions : lured the poor wretches in :
Back to more desperate drinking : back to more reck-
less sin.

One evening in the Spring-time. The holiest time
o' year.

When Love and Peace seem calling to those who have ears
to hear.

Rachel heard children screaming, so wild, she ran outside—
And the ragged little Hameses, three of them, terrified,
Clung to her, sobbing—"Mother ! Oh come to Mother !
Quick !"

And Rachel went with the children, and saw . . . what
turned her sick,
And dumb with helpless horror. . . .

In a room with scarce a stick
Of furniture inside it, save a bed and a broken chair,
Sat the man—the husband—tipsy ! And near him, fallen
there,

On the floor, before the window, where the Spring light
touched her head
With its pure and radiant glory . . . lay the wife—the
woman—DEAD!
In a pool of blood, that trickled, and dyed the bare boards
red.

There was Coroner and Inquest. And Hames gave
evidence.
They had to wait a little before they could get at sense
Out of his fuddled fancies, and sottish sulks and qualms.
His wife had been out drinking, he said, at 'The Stanley
Arms.'
And he had been out drinking, he owned, at 'The Holly
Bush.'
When they came back she struck him, and he gave her "a
little push"—
"No more than he'd often given"—and she caught her foot
in her gown,
And cracked her head on the fender, he thought, as she
tumbled down.
That was all he knew about it, he'd swear, with his dying
breath—
And the Jury gave a verdict of "Accidental Death."

* * * * *

A fortnight after that happened, Rachel came round to
tea.
Though we both of us lived in London, 'twas seldom she
and me
Could have a chat together. She looked so pale and weak,
I made her eat a crumpet before I let her speak.

She told me all this story, and trembled like a rag.
And when she'd done, she says—"Annie! we're leaving
'The Lamb and Flag.'

We are going out of the business. We've done our very
best

As Publicans; I say it; let you search from east to west.
Our House was well conducted. We've closed at the proper
time.

We've kept the Law. We've battled, against drunkenness
and crime.

But I feel it, and so does Thomas, if we held to the House,
and stayed,

It would break the hearts within us—for *it's far too sad a Trade*.
Oh! I can't tell what I've suffered!" says Tom's wife,
Rachel Dale.

"Look at the name on the Sign-board!—Annie, it's made
me quail!

That ever a sign so sacred as the Lamb, and the Flag, we see
A shining in our Churches, should look on the misery
And shame of the Public Houses!—" She says—"It's
blasphemy!

That's what it is to my thinkin'. Oh no! We are going
away.

We've done with the Liquor Traffic for ever and for aye.
We are going into Coffee! And you'll find we shall make
it pay!

And so they did! Why, bless you! They opened a
splendid place,
And called it the "Jolly Sandboys." When Thomas ran a
race

He knew the way to win it!—I've seen a Coffee House

Looking that dull and cheerless it wouldn't tempt a mouse,
Much less a thirsty workman! There's one I could show
you straight—

With a stale loaf in the window! and one herring on a plate,
That's been there a week to my knowledge!—some sugar
full of flies!

A jug with nothing in it! And two mouldy-looking pies,
On dirty bits of paper! You can wait there till you're old,
And when you get the Coffee, it's always thick . . . and cold!

Now go to the "Jolly Sandboys," and you get it quick
and hot!

The Bar a perfect picture. Food ready on the spot.
Iced drinks in the heat of summer. Hot soup on the winter
days.

And the money they turn over! in a twelvemonth! would
amaze

Those who think Coffee Houses can never pay their way.
Why! Tom has eggs for breakfast, and rashers, *every* day!

But just a word to finish. That "Accidental Death"
Was not Accident, but Murder. A fight—a blow—. The
breath

Dashed from a tipsy woman, in a moment. Yet—think
clear—

Not Murder born of Malice, but Murder born of Beer.
Don't judge Hames. Judge the Nation. For what doth
Scripture say?—

"Woe to those who put stumbling-blocks across a brother's way."
Well may we cower and tremble, lest at the Judgment Day
We answer as a nation for the wealth which we have made
Out of our brother's stumbling! out of this piteous Trade!

Yet the time is surely coming, when the country shall be
free
From drink-born crime and madness, and bare-foot poverty,
And the dead weight of Temptation. Oh! pray for it!
Pray, and pray!
Till our noble England, rising, rolls her Reproach away
And leads her sober People, nourished, and clothed, and
shod,
Out of the dark of Evil into the Light of God!

Grit.

“ If Jim's Wife knew such a boy do you think she would tell the story ? ”

“ Yes. I think she would. And she will try to do so, forthwith.”

Such was the invitation and such the reply contained in two letters which passed between two strangers (one the Author) on the subject of the incident related in “ Grit.”

In the dining hall of the Royal Hospital School at Greenwich is inscribed upon the Honour Roll of members past and present the name of John Canty, aged 14½, who in 1898 received from the hand of Admiral Tracy the bronze medal of the Royal Humane Society, in the presence of his school-fellows and the officers of the College, for his gallantry in saving the life of a fisherman—in a heavy sea at Sandgate—under the circumstances recorded in the ballad.

The incident was brought to the Author's notice by Mr. W. S. Campbell, who for the last ten or eleven years has devoted the spare hours of a busy life to enthusiastic Temperance work, and has conducted a successful Band of Hope, established by the National Temperance League in 1871, amongst the sailor lads in the Royal Hospital School at Greenwich, where may be witnessed the happy, unique, and prophetic spectacle of one thousand sturdy young teetotalers. To his courtesy the Author is indebted for the remarkable details of an episode which has few parallels amongst stories of the saving of life.

The original of Teddy Moore is at present serving on board H.M.S. *Formidable*. The illness from which he suffered in 1898 was pneumonia. He had been dangerously ill: and it is a fact, though an almost incredible one, that he performed this courageous act of rescue on the day that he was allowed out of the Convalescent Home for the first time. He sustained no after injury.

Brit.



WAS talking to Mr. Weeding,
Whose wife is a friend of mine :
Their eldest lad had started
As Fireman, on the line :
And says I—" If Jack's teetotal, he'll get on well, you'll see."
And Weeding bawls out—" Gammon ! That's where we
don't agree !

Jack's got to face wind and weather,
And never know funk nor fear,
And work like a man—not a baby,
And he wants his reg'lar beer !
I like a boy with muscle, an' GRIT, an' pluck, an' go !
And you can't grow that on water ! as your Temperance
Milksops show ! "

He's rough with his tongue is Weeding,
But his wife is a friend o' mine,
And I didn't want to quarrel.
Though I *might* have said—It's fine
For *you* to talk in that way when if you'd drop *your* beer
You could pay my Jim the money you've owed him since
last year !

When a man pours the fourth of his wages
Each week down the Public-house sink,
You *might* suppose he'd be thankful
If his son gave up the drink
And helped to feed his mother ! And buy his sisters boots !
But I didn't want to quarrel : so I says—" Judge a tree by
its fruits.

You talk of Temperance Milksons.
Now I'll you a tale of one,
And what he did upon water.
I don't make it up for fun,
Or for fancy, Mr. Weeding. I happen to know it's true.
The story has some GRIT in it : and some pluck, and
muscle, too."

And this is what I told him :—
Jim's sister, Mrs. Moore,
A nice woman, and a widow,
Whose husband had left her poor—
Had a handsome boy, her Teddy, as straight as a two-foot
rule,
At Greenwich, down the river, in the Royal Hospital School

Training to be a sailor.
And I'll say as I go along,
That in that splendid School-house
Where they muster a thousand strong,
Every boy is a pledged teetotaler. And that's a finer thing
For our Navy to be proud of, than of all the shells they
fling

From the battle-ships and gun-boats.
You may laugh at Temperance "fads,"
But the hope of England's future
Rests on her Temperance lads.
And the battle to free this country from Drink's black
slavery,
Will be the mightiest battle ever fought upon land or sea !

Teddy came down to see us
When he had turned fourteen,
And though he *is* our nevvvy,
I doubt if you've ever seen
A smarter lad than he was. Sturdy and strong on his feet.
A rare one to sleep. And for eating!—I tell you that boy
could eat !

Always the first in mischief.
Always the last at chaff,
Mad for a joke. And for laughing!—
Lord ! how that boy *did* laugh !
I never met his equal for sauciness and play.
And there ! you couldn't scold him, he had such a coaxing
way !

Times have I started at it.
And *meant* to scold him, too !
And he'd catch me round and kiss me !
Before I was half-way through.
"You're so handsome when you're angry," says that
monkey ! when I stares !
But he had a heart, had Teddy : and he *always* said his
prayers :

And he didn't know what fear was.

But of course, as schoolboys will,

When he went back to Greenwich

He must go and catch a chill—

(For care was molly-coddling!) and the cold struck home
like a knife,

And for weeks that boy lay sinking, and drifting out of life.

Ah! Jim's poor widowed sister,

How she prayed for the life of her son!

"Annie," she says, "if I lose him

I *can* say, 'Thy Will be done.'

But, oh! may the Lord have mercy! . . . " And, friends,
it turned to cure,

And they pulled him through! And now listen! to the
story of Teddy Moore.

When he was getting better,

Still as pale as a strip o' foam,

They sent him down to Sandgate

To a Convalescent Home.

And it happened when he got there, a storm had roared all
night,

Which set the breakers rolling, and churned the green sea, white.

And the first hour he crawled out, mind,

As shaky as he could be,—

A fisherman, in the open,

Pitched over into the sea.

He'd gone to tie up a cutter, and the rope he was hauling—
broke!

And the man went down like a lead-line, for he couldn't
swim a stroke.

Went down in the raging water.
And the people who heard his cries—
Crowds on the shore a-watching—
Thought he'd drown before their eyes :
And they screamed and ran, in a panic—but drowned he'd
have been, for sure,
If a *boy* hadn't plunged to his rescue, and that boy was
Teddy Moore.

Daft, you may say, to attempt it,
And he fresh from a hospital bed !
But funk, or a fear for himself,
Never entered his heart or his head.
He saw the man was sinking, and he thought of nothing on
earth
But to tear off his boots and his jacket and swim for all he
was worth !

Talk of grit ! and go ! and muscle !
He breasted those furious waves
Every nerve in his brave young body
Braced with the pluck that *saves*.
And he saved him. Boy though he was. Held him up
with the strength of four.
Till they got a boat over the breakers and brought them
both ashore !

* * * * *

Weeding turns round a-gaping
“ A school-boy ! Say what you can !
Just off a bed o' sickness !
And to hold up a drowning man !

If he didn't die for his trouble, then he ought to ha' died!
That's sure!"

"Died!" I says. "Stuff and nonsense! It didn't hurt
Teddy Moore.

He got the medal for it.

And his mother cried like a fool,
When 'twas pinned upon his jacket
Before the whole Naval School.

Now he's serving King and country, and is drafted into the
Fleet,

As hearty and strong a young sailor as you could wish to
meet."

"Well!" says Weeding, speaking ponderous,

"I couldn't ha' done it myself."

Now he's just the shape, is Weeding,
Of a beer-jug on the shelf.

And laugh I did! "No! you couldn't. That's where we
can agree.

But you are not a teetotaler. And Teddy was, you see!!"

On the Casquets.

AN INCIDENT OF THE WRECK OF THE STELLA.

This memorable wreck took place on the Thursday in Holy Week, April, 1899.

"On Thursday afternoon, the day before Good Friday, at 3.30," says the *Illustrated London News* of that week, "in a thick fog, between Alderney and Guernsey, the London and South Western Railway Company's fine steamer, *Stella*, which had left Southampton at a quarter past eleven in the forenoon, was caught among the Casquet rocks on her way to the islands, and going at high speed her steel bottom was torn open in a few minutes on a submerged reef of sharp jagged stone. Six boats with many passengers, all the women and children, were quickly put afloat, and life-belts supplied . . . nearly all who had remained on board were drowned. Seventy-five lives are lost; 106 were saved. . . . The commander, Captain Reeks, the chief engineer, the other officers, and half the crew—perished!"

A tribute to the bravery of Mary Rogers appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* of April 10th, 1899, headed, "An Heroic Stewardess." To the account there given of the manner in which Mrs. Rogers met death, to the details kindly sent by the daughter of Mrs. Rogers, living at Southampton, and to the personal recollections of a lady passenger who had crossed from Jersey in the *Stella* some 24 times, and was well acquainted with the Stewardess, the Author is indebted for the materials she has woven into the ballad.

The outlook upon life is sometimes depressing enough, even to Christians. So much materialism abroad! such pitiful clinging to the rags and tinsel of this world's treasure! so thick a mist of unbelief! so little faith! Yet in the darkest moment of saddened contemplation, the memory of Mary Rogers must come as a strong salt wind from the ocean, blowing aside the mists of doubt, and revealing the cloudless sky of God's Reality above us! The heavenly beauty of child-like faith breathing from her last words can never be expressed by mortal pen. They are words for the soul alone. The strength of them, all they hold and mean for struggling humanity, is to be felt, not uttered. That such a woman as Mary Rogers, Stewardess, so lived her obscure life amongst us, and so yielded up that life, is a fact to be reverently treasured by the English people, is an unspeakable memory to be kept green by their rejoicing tears.

On the Casquets.

AN INCIDENT OF THE WRECK OF THE *STELLA*.

IT was Holy Week, I remember: the week before
Easter Day.

They were ringing the bells for service, in the
churches round our way,

So peaceful-like, and quiet, when Jim brought home to me
The news of an awful shipwreck out in the Channel sea.

The wreck of the steamer *Stella*. Maybe you remember it
plain.

But the tale can't be told too often, and so I tell it again.
And may it be told by our children, when we are under the
sod—

In the Memory of a Woman, and to the glory of God !

* * * * *

The *Stella* left Southampton one shiny April day,
Bound for the Channel Islands, for Jersey—where they say
There are months of golden summer, and apples and plums
in piles,
And hedges of rose and fuchsia a-blowing for miles and
miles !

I've never been to Jersey, and I never *shall* go there—
For I've never been on a steamer. And if you paid my fare,
And gave me something over, I shouldn't want to go!
Many's the time Jim has asked me! and I've said always,
 " No.

While I can have an outing on a bit of solid land,
I won't be rolled topsy-turvy!" And I never can under-
stand

How other folks enjoy it! Yet there on the ship that day,
Men, women, and little children, were merry at heart and gay,

All of them looking forward to holiday and rest.
The *Stella* was strong and steady. Her crew were of the
best.

And no one thought of danger, till swiftly, over the sea,
Like a cloud of smoke a-rolling—the fog came, suddenly!

Fogs are bad enough in London. They're the terror of the
wave.

I've heard that sailors hate them, and fear them like the
grave.

They steal across the ocean, faster than rain-scuds run,
And muffle the wind into silence, and blot out the light of
the sun.

Like the mouth of some grim sea-monster rising with teeth
a-drip,

The jaws of the Sea-fog opened . . . and swallowed up the
ship!

Into the deadly vapour that hides the reefs and shoals,
The *Stella* passed—with her cargo of nigh on two hundred
souls!

Did she stop? or "slow" her engines? Did she creep
along the sea

Like a snail? like a lame duck paddling? for that's how it
ought to be

When fog is on the water—No! 'Tis a mortal crime
For ships in these days of Hurry to fail to keep their time.

The Captain didn't slacken. He steamed full speed ahead.
Peace to his soul! He is sleeping: till the sea gives up her
dead.

But, Woe! to the great rich Companies, for whom such
things are done.

As I say to Jim, I'd try them—for MANSLAUGHTER! every one!

On rushed the *Stella* blindfold, laden with human life.
Father and mother and brother, sister and husband and
wife.

Helpless, poor souls, as dummies shut in a wooden box—
Till the keel of the flying vessel crashed on the Casquet
Rocks!

O Lord! those sharp rock-hatchets! They hewed her and
hacked her in two:

Ripped up her strong steel plating, as I'd cut butter
through:

Rent her and wrenched her asunder, and tore away plank
from plank . . .

In six, mad, awful minutes, the twin-screw steamer sank.

SANK! . . . can you think of them minutes? . . . and yet
there were deeds done then

That will shine to the endless honour of Christian women
and men.

Deeds done, and last words spoken—Glorious ! Wonderful !
True !

Though it's only of just one woman that I want to speak to
you.

The Stewardess, Mrs. Rogers. She'd served for years at
sea :

And she wanted to retire, and had said that this would be
Her last run with the *Stella*, for she meant to settle down
With her children, at Southampton : she'd a little home in
the town.

I know no more about her, except that I've been told
That she was nice to look at : and wasn't very old :
And went about her duties in a pleasant sort of way,
Like scores of quiet women who pass us any day.

When the vessel struck, she was helping the sick folk down
below.

They clung to her, poor creatures ! as I should have clung,
I know—

And she spoke to them brave and steady : and through the
shock of wreck

She held them back from panic, and brought them out on
deck

And bound the life-belts round them. One lady stood alone
Without a belt. The Stewardess unstrapped her own . . .
her own !

And *forced* it on the stranger. “Quick, madam ! You
can't choose !

You're my charge !” she says, “You *must* have it ! There
isn't a second to lose.”

And she took the lady, and pushed her into the crowded boat.

“Get in yourself!” roared the sailors—though they scarce could keep afloat—

“Jump in for your life, Mrs. Rogers!” . . . One thought of the English shore,

Of the children who were waiting for her step at the cottage door.

One look at that choking boat-load . . . “No!” came her answer high,

“You are full enough. I should sink you. Good-bye to you all. Good-bye!”

And she turned towards death as fearless as I’d walk down the street.

“Lord, take me!” they heard her saying. And the ship sank under her feet.

The body of Mary Rogers went down to its deep sea-grave. But if ever a Crown was waiting for the faithful and the brave!

If ever the Angels were ready to carry a soul away, They carried the soul of that woman to Paradise that day.

* * * * *

“Lord! take me!” Them words will haunt me till the day I come to die.

Not “Save me! Lord!” or “Help me!”—as some of us might cry

From the deck of a foundering vessel—but—“*Take me!*”

O great and blest,

And strong as the wing of an angel, was the faith in this woman’s breast.

'Twas the faith of little children who turn to the friends
they trust.

'Twas the faith of a whole life, hidden—where never moth,
or rust,

Or thief, could corrupt or steal it. O tell it out abroad!

This story of Mary Rogers to the Glory of the Lord.

In a world where we shrink from dying with the fear of
craven curs,

It's just a glimpse of Heaven! to hear of a death like hers.

Speak to the Unbelievers, and when they deny and deride,

Tell them the tale of the *Stella*, and how the Stewardess
died.

Grannie Pettinger.

The original of Grannie Pettinger was—herself! for she really lived, the veritable personality described by Annie Hyde, and the smiling countenance of the dear old organ-woman was well known in several districts of the Metropolis during the Seventies and Eighties.

The Author can remember vividly the first time she saw Grannie Pettinger, some 25 years ago, “wrapped up like the queerest bundle in every rag she had,” playing her American organette at the corner of a windy street near the Heath at Hampstead. Week by week the uncomplaining, cheery old body was observed at her post, grinding out her melodies through fair weather and foul, until observation ripened into interested enquiry, and a friendship arose which only terminated when Grannie Pettinger died at Walthamstow in January, 1897.

The Author wore for 12 years a thin gold ring of inferior workmanship, which, though broken, she still counts amongst her most valued possessions, inasmuch as it was for 50 years the keeper of Grannie Pettinger’s wedding-ring, and was timidly proffered after some insufficient service rendered, with the words, “It’s a poor gift, dear lady, an’ a poor return, but it’s the best as I’ve got to give ye, an’ it’s *real* gold!”

The old woman had been in the habit of regularly pawning the ring at Christmas time for the sum of 1s. 6d., in order to secure on Christmas Day a meal for herself and her cats!—a maimed family, fondly cherished, rescued from torture at the idle hands of juvenile “hooligans.” Surely such an offering of gratitude,

though weighed in the balances with the gratitude of a Sultan offering the silks of Samarcand, would not be found wanting.

The poor are often accused of ingratitude, and not unjustly; but ingratitude is a moth that nests in velvet as frequently as in home-spun; an evil insect hatched neither by poverty nor riches but by irreligion. Grannie Pettinger was a simply and sincerely religious woman, and a more thankful, contented spirit than hers never inhabited mortal flesh and blood. She never made the worst of her needs and necessities; never dreamed of hiding from one agent bringing relief, the relief she had received from another. If you dropped a pound of tea into her lap, she as often as not told you with delighted wonder of the pound of butter your philanthropic predecessor had bestowed the day before. She accepted the most ordinary bounty as an extraordinary act of munificence, and her tongue was never weary of discoursing upon the amazing goodness and benevolence of her friends. The Grateful and the True never lack friends, and Grannie had many, amongst all sorts and conditions of men. A gentleman—first a chance passer-by, then an observer of her, lastly an active helper, gave her the American organette which was her principal source of livelihood. Other friends subscribed a small monthly allowance, which helped her for some years during the winter months. Other friends again, united and bought for her the little "Shelter" under which she sat happily ensconced on rainy days at her post in Epping Forest. One friend, and he was a poor man, a railway clerk, did that for her of which she never knew, but which was, perhaps, the greatest proof of disinterested friendship she ever received: an act in itself so generous and so loyal that to merely hear of it gladdens the heart like spring.

Its record shall be briefly told.

With an honourable pride always to be found amongst the noblest poor, Grannie Pettinger had a horror of being "buried by the parish." Her husband was dead: she had neither son nor daughter: she had out-lived all those of her kin who might possibly be expected to make provision for her private interment:

she had to make provision for herself: and in a secret drawer in her little cottage at Walthamstow, she had hidden a sum of money—sixpences, shillings, threepenny bits, coppers—amounting altogether to several pounds, the accumulated savings of years, which she intended should cover the expense of her funeral, and the existence of which she had confided to the railway clerk aforesaid, whom she affectionately called “George.”

“As soon as I be took, George,” Grannie had said to him, “promise me as ye’ll come down. Ye’ll find the money ready, and then ye can bury me decent, lad, an’ I shall cost ye nothin’.”

And George had promised.

But death came suddenly to Grannie Pettinger one freezing January night, as she lay alone under her crazy roof-tree, sick and feeble, but staunch and independent to the last, and when at her urgent request George was told, and hurried down to the cottage, he found her too far removed within the mysterious Valley of the Shadow to tell him where the money lay. That it had been actually upon her person at the time he bent over her for a last farewell—and the old woman feebly touched his arm, doubtless to indicate its presence, a gesture he misunderstood—seems to be proved by the fact that an empty purse, and empty “pocket,” were afterwards found beneath her body: the contents of both had been rifled: the little hoard of burial silver—was gone! The neighbours had strong suspicions as to who had robbed the dead, for clothing and many “effects” were missing when a search was instituted, and found later in unexpected places, but the thieves were never convicted.

Yet the body of Grannie Pettinger was not handed over to the Parochial authorities, for George—not bound to her by any tie at all save the tie of common kindness—out of his own scantily-filled purse, buried her “decent,” and followed her himself as chief mourner.

Mention has been made above of her “shelter” in Epping Forest. For many years before her death she was a quaint familiar figure to visitors approaching the Forest by the entrance

beyond Chingford Station. She sat under a beautiful lime tree at the entrance, during the months the limes were in leaf, and presided over a little stall of toys and fruit acceptable to the flag-flying, halloo-ing school children, who, on "Treat" and "Festival" days, were discharged from brakes and trains in tumultuous crowds: glad, pale-faced little creatures, dear to Grannie's heart, carted out from far-away London parishes to run and leap for a few hours in the purer air of London's woodland.

The summer seller of toys and fruit was an illiterate old lady. Her orthography would have delighted Dickens. The Author possesses letters traced in her almost indecipherable handwriting, in which the old woman speaks of having suffered severely through the winter from "the rumi-tisam and the bronchious"! Yet she was a voluminous epistolarian, and wrote as many letters as Madame de Staël! Her literary proclivities were as marked as they were unusual amongst the women of her class, and in an age afflicted by autobiographical mania, she developed the infectious idea of writing her life—and did write it! toiling at the task with dauntless persistence when she was between sixty and seventy years of age.

The strange account she composed of her chaotic and unhappy youth, of her marriage with a drunken railway sub-contractor and semi-prize-fighter to whom she was sincerely attached and of whose pugilistic achievements she was genuinely proud, of her widowhood, of the treacherous dealing of business colleagues that eventually reduced her from competence to penury, of her struggles to earn her livelihood respectably, and of many other things palatable and unpalatable, after having been adjusted in punctuation, spelling, grammar, etc., by a friend, was published by Sir W. M. Leng in the *Sheffield Weekly Telegraph*, and afterwards in book form. She received the sum of £10 for the work, and viewed from a literary standpoint it was not worth more; for her autobiographical "style" belonged to the order of wearisome commonplace, and

her selection and grouping of incident was inartistic. Nevertheless as the genuine production of an uneducated woman of the Masses, the volume was remarkable, and she sold many copies from her stall under the lime tree to interested readers.

Not content with this intellectual feat, Grannie Pettinger next produced a little pamphlet giving an account of her organ-life, which she sold for twopence, with a print of a picture of herself, in possession of the Author, taken by a kindly amateur who presented her with abundant copies. She entitled the pamphlet, "Incidents in the Life of Elizabeth Pettinger, the Old Organ-woman of Epping Forest." And its crude truthful pages, now probably out of print, are distinctly readable. They are a curious revelation of the mendicant life of the streets, as known to one who herself followed a trade depending for support upon the charity of the populace, but who followed it uprightly, never stooping to deception. As Annie Hyde bears witness—

"She neither begged, nor stole,
Nor lied, nor whined, nor tumbled."

But the lying, whining, thieving, drunken swarms of professional impostors, with whom she constantly came into contact, who constantly harassed and insulted her, must have made the road of righteousness as hard a road to follow behind the sliding paper sheets of an American organette as anywhere else. Without the inner glow of faith and trust in the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and of us all," which filled and warmed her old heart, and kept the fires of prayer alight, Grannie must have succumbed to the evil influences of her lot, and have lied and tumbled with the worst. As it is, her character shines out from a gloomy background in fair relief, and the spirit of her life is summed up in the meek reply she makes to a loud-tongued scold who endeavours to impress upon her the valuable fact that many better women than she exist!—

"There may be better women than me: but I trys to be as good as I can."

Here is one of Grannie's experiences, a scene in black and white taken from the pamphlet, lightly touched with colour, but yet scarcely altered from the original.

The American organette is tinkling its little tunes faintly, but peacefully, outside Gospel Oak Station in the north-west of London. It is late on a winter night, but people coming to, and going from, the station, pass and re-pass her frequently. Two half-tipsy termagants, one, alas! carrying a helpless infant, roughly accost the player and demand of her money for beer. Seeing their condition, the old woman quietly refuses the outrageous demand, and goes on playing. The termagant with the baby, tries the effect of intimidation—

“Yer won't stand us a drink, yer old lump! Then I stays here and aggrawates yer till yer do!”

She plants herself in front of the organette and bursts into tap-room singing of a kind which causes a few by-standers to look round. Seeing their attention is arrested she stops, and apostrophises Grannie at the top of her voice—

“Are yer goin' ter give me that shillin' yer promised, or are yer not? Calls herself an honest female! hires me and my pore baby ter stand 'ere shiverin' in the bitter cold, and then won't pay me for it fair! Two mortal hours 'ave I been singin' for 'er with my pore child as 'll die of it, like as not, and she'd send me 'ome without my shillin'! Aint yer ashamed of it yer wicked old cheat!”

A small crowd collects. The woman stormily ventilates her supposed grievance, calling upon her companion for substantiation of her statement, which is glibly given. Grannie Pettinger protests in vain. The sympathies of the crowd are with the mother of the baby—which is being secretly pinched until it cries piteously. There are murmurs of “Shame! Give the poor woman her shilling, and let her take her baby home!” Seeing her momentary advantage the miserable fury, thirsting for another draught of the poison already working in her veins, abandons eloquence for action—“Ketch 'old of my kid, mate,”

she shouts to her accomplice, "and I'll pretty soon knock my shillin' out of the old cow!" . . .

Another minute and Grannie and her organ will be reposing in the mud, when at this thrilling juncture enter a friendly night-postman to whom the old woman is well known. He catches the Amazon and holds her in a powerful grip:—

"Off to the station, mother! Quick as you can go!"

And Grannie obeys him, hurriedly toddling, thankful for her timely deliverance.

Another of her winter night experiences is worth recording.

While playing on one of her usual "beats" one chilly evening, a respectably dressed man asked her civilly to allow him to bring her a small bundle which he wished to leave under her organ-stand for a couple of hours, promising her sixpence for the accommodation. She consented, and he departed. A few minutes later he re-appeared, no longer the respectable artisan, but a picture of destitution! devoid of hat, coat, boots, socks, and muffler!—he deposited a bundle which it is needless to remark contained his wardrobe under her stand, and vanished for the second time, telling her cheerfully that he was going to sing hymns in the road. Two hours afterwards he brought her the promised sixpence, took his bundle, and calmly proceeded to re-clothe himself, during which process the naive chronicler tells us the following brief and pointed conversation took place:—

"Come along down to the Pub, old lady, and have a toothful o' rum."

"No, thank 'ee, Master. I never drinks nothin' of that."

"Don't you, now! How much do you think I've swallered to-night?"

"Couldn't say."

"Sixteen pen'orth. I takes it to keep out the cold, old lady."

"Why don't you keep your clothes on, Master! Then you wouldn't feel the cold. Look at me."

"Aye! look at you! How much money d'ye think I should get

if I started hymn-singing with all your togs on! You're a bigger fool than I took you for."

Was she a fool? Well for the dishonest poor if more of her folly leavened their wisdom.

The beautiful incident which Annie Hyde narrates in the ballad, beautiful because true, is told at length in the pamphlet: though in re-telling it the Author has trusted to memory rather than to printed matter, for the reason that the oral account given to her many years ago contained the picturesque elements lacking in Grannie's prose. Stories of reformation, of penitent felons, of house-breakers who turn into honest citizens, are to be found in story-books, but not often in every-day existence, and the story of Sam Bridges, an actual life fact, is, in its way, an heirloom to humanity; a watchword of Hope to be passed along the lines of the despairing.

This ballad will possibly be given sometimes to audiences in the "slums" and bye-ways of our cities, where the majority of the listeners will be drawn from the very mendicant ranks in which Grannie Pettinger walked. In such a case the Author would suggest that the reciter should use it as a "text," and after its recitation speak from it, to the people, enforcing the lessons such a life, such a character, teach, as strongly as words will enforce them.

Let the speaker endeavour to drive home to the hearts of the poor, the rubbed but golden nail of maxim that Honesty is the best policy; that Honesty and Truth in the trades of the world—be it a street-hawker's business in tapes and boot-laces, or the sales of great emporiums carried out behind a hundred yards of plate-glass frontage—Honesty and Truth, in every condition of life, and under every variety of circumstance, will hold the field and reap the harvest against all comers.

If you have matches to sell, sell them cheerfully, and do not beg. You are an honourable trader, though a lowly one. You will surely win respect and support. But if you have no matches and are driven to beg, at least beg truly.

It is the Untruth of the streets that frustrates the very end the pedlar and beggar seek, that ties the purse-strings of the ready almsgiver. It is the mendacity of mendicity, the dishonesty of Poverty that steels the sympathies of Charity Organisation Committees. It is the whining tale "pitched" the moment a kindly face pauses before the basket of imitation lace or half-withered flowers, the fluent lying that discourses of the eight starving children left at home, of the baby afflicted with fits, of the broken-legged husband who has "done no work" for four years, of the unappeased hunger which has tasted neither "bite nor sup" to-day, yesterday, nor the day before; it is the glib profanity that takes the Holiest Name in vain twice in a breath, and falsely swears to the lace as "real," to the flowers as "picked this morning": it is this! which hardens the kindly face, and chills the charity which else would flow out warmly. Let the poor hawker (poor enough as she stands, Heaven knows!) tell the naked truth about the flowers and the lace, which the eye of average intelligence can already discern for itself, and Pity asserts her divine sway immediately.

Tell it to the "feckless" shiftless legions of the permanently unemployed, reiterate, reiterate, reiterate it, again and again, and yet again, until hearing paves the way to conviction, and conviction leads on to reformed action, the ancient truth of which the obscure old woman, sitting beside her little toy stall in Epping Forest, was a living illustration—*that it is those who help themselves who are helped of God*: that it is those who are undeserving of aid who are alone left permanently unaided. Sorrow knocks at the door of a home, of a life, it is true: misfortune enters with a heavy foot: but neither sorrow nor misfortune abide as perpetual guests unless encouraged. Proclaim it boldly! The experience of the Ages witnesses, that persistent ill-fortune only dogs the steps of those who are persistently unworthy of good fortune. There never was a beggar who continued a beggar for a succession of years who did not beg from choice, and not from necessity. The man who

repeatedly borrows money from his friends is not the victim of adverse circumstances, but of defective moral purpose. The woman who is repeatedly assisted to the post, the situation, she never retains, is not a sufferer from 'the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,' but from the incorrigible character of her own faults and failings.

It has been a sweet satisfaction to the Author to gather together these few scattered facts and reminiscences of an individuality, which, though unknown and unnoticed by the world, yet made the world the better for its brave presence. If the streets of our Capitals were full of Grannie Pettingers, almsgiving would be the joy it was meant to be, and Poverty itself would seem an enviable lot. For courageous contentment, for a spirit of strong and beautiful independence, for humble faith, for stedfast truth, for rare gratitude, for energy and perseverance wonderful beyond praise, the old organ-woman of Walthamstow had few equals amongst the struggling Poor of our rich Land.

Grannie Pettinger.



WE all like to hear a story,
All of us, young and old.
And here is one, a true one,
That should be writ in gold.

And I'll tell it you as nearly as 'twas told me, long ago,
By a poor old organ-woman who lived at Walthamstow.

She was nothing of a beggar.

But a dear old honest soul
As ever earned a living.

She neither begged, nor stole,
Nor lied, nor whined, nor tippled: but mornings and
afternoons

You'd see her with her organ, playing her little tunes

In every sort of weather.

I've seen her in driving sleet!
Smiling, and playing cheerful,

At the corner of the street:
Wrapped up, like the queerest bundle—in every rag she had:
For she got 'the rummy-tizam,' as she called it, very bad!

Her name was Mrs. Pettinger,

But we called her 'Grannie,' or 'Gran.'
She had 'beats' half over London.

And there wasn't a woman, or man,

Who knew her—but spoke friendly, and would pass the
time of day

When they met her, trudging steady, in her independent
way.

I could talk a lot about Grannie,

But it wouldn't be in place.

I only wish you had known her.

She had such a sweet old face!

She was such a brave old body! working, and living alone.

Her husband dead and buried: and no children of her own.

Well. This is what she told me.

She was going home one night:

And carrying her organ

Which wasn't over light:

And when she left the station—she had come by the
midnight train—

A sudden storm was blowing, of wind, and hail, and rain.

And she looked about for shelter.

In that part of Walthamstow

There was building-ground: and houses—

A dozen in a row—

Finished and standing empty, with porches built of wood:

And she made for one of these porches as fast as ever she
could.

It was pitchy-dark, she told me.

And as she got inside,

A man jumped up and seized her!

And she thought she should have died

Of fright, as he growled savage that he'd crack her head
in two

If she didn't crouch down quiet, and hide herself from view !

“ O Lord ! O dear ! ” gasped Grannie

As he gripped her by the arm.

“ I'm only a poor old woman.

Don't 'ee do me any harm ! ”

“ Than don't yer start a squealin', ” says he with an ugly oath.

“ Do I want the Bobby's lantern to come and spy us both ? ”

“ There was never a policeman

That I was afeared to see ! ”

Says Grannie—“ Then it's different,

Old card,” he snorts, “ with me.

Do yer think I'm such a green fool that I wants to be nabbed again ?

Bide still ! ”——so they crouched in silence : and listened to the rain.

But presently, she told me—

They began to talk a bit.

He'd been in prison for stealing,

And wasn't proud of it :

But the man was cold, and hungry, and despairing in his mind :

And he meant to rob them houses to see what he could find.

“ But deary me,” says Grannie,

“ Ye can't rob an empty house !

There's nothing in it, bless ye,

That would satisfy a mouse ! ”

"Oh," says he, "when a cove is desperate he can find a thing or two.

There's the taps. And the brass fittin's. And the door-knobs. They'll be new.

I can raise a trifle on 'em."——

"But ye'll *never* get along,

Poor heart!" says Grannie Pettinger,

"By doing what is wrong.

Surely some friend will help ye? . . . " "Friend!" he sneers, "that's a word

As it's easy to say! But who's likely to be friends with a prison bird?

Who's goin' to act the friendly

To a chap as has slid down hill?"

And Grannie thinks a minute.

"Man," she says . . . "The Bible will.

There's a message in the Bible that—was—written—there—for—you!"

"Well, then," he grunts, "let's 'ear it: for I guess the Bible's true."

"*Let him that stole . . . that be you, mind.*

Let him steal . . . it says, . . . no more!

But rather let him labour

That he may have in store

To give to him that needeth . . . Aye! that's cheerin', man," says she.

"There's hope in that! There's honour! There's a life of honesty!"

Now go and act upon it !

Look ! I'll lend 'ee half-a-crown——"

And she pulled it out of the pocket

Under her old stuff gown.

" To-day I took three shillin's, as near as I can tell,
And I can do with sixpence, for a little, very well.

And this half-crown will start ye,

And ye can buy a broom,

And stand near a railway station,

And ye'll find there's always room

For a man to sweep a crossing if he aint afeared of *wet*.

Man!" she says, " Go and try it! And never mind the
debt.

And as sure as our Father in Heaven

Has always took care o' me,

He'll take care o' you, if you struggle

To do your best," says she.

She could scarce see his face in the darkness, but he
answered gruff and plain,

" I'll take the money, mother. And I'll pay it back again.

If I don't, as my name's Sam Bridges,

May I hang, or die in a ditch."

Then he carried the organ for her

Down the road as black as pitch.

And when they reached her cottage, she let him sleep on the
floor,

And gave him a bit of breakfast, and then she saw him no
more.

That happened in the Autumn.

And the Winter and Spring went by,
And she never saw anything of him.

She thought perhaps he'd try
To write, or send a message. But he didn't, by night or
by day.
And she was tempted to fancy her half-crown was thrown
away.

When one day as she was walking.

Very slow, through a London square,
Where painters were painting the house-
fronts

With ladders high in the air,
She heard a shout behind her! and when she made a
stand,
A man ran down a ladder with a paint-brush in his hand.

And there was her friend! that altered
She wouldn't have known him again.
So smart! and so respectable!

He was on his legs, 'twas plain!
And he told her what had happened since she had seen him
last:
And it shows God's sun *is* shining when the sky seems
overcast.

He'd got the broom and the crossing,
And was doing fair, he said;
When an accident knocked him senseless,
And he woke in an Hospital bed:—

Now, before he'd been sent to prison, he'd worked at an
honest trade
As Painter and Decorator. And was worth the wage they
paid.

And there—when he looked about him,
And 'took stock,' as the saying is—
Who should he find a lying
In the very next bed to his!
(Out of all the trades in London—you scarce could think
'twas true)
But a man, a Master Painter, in the very old trade he knew!

There they lay beside each other,
Both under the surgeon's knife:
And trouble made them comrades,
For they both had a fight for life.
And when they were getting better, Sam told his story
square:
Hid nothing, and shirked nothing: but told out full and fair,

Of his meeting with Grannie Pettinger
And what he had *meant* to do.
And the Master Painter listened,
And, says he—when Sam was through—
“If a poor old organ-woman could give you a helping hand,
I can. And I will. When we leave here, you shall come
and take your stand

Along of my men. I'll employ you.
You shall work at your trade again.”
“So now!” says the man to Grannie,
“Thank God for that storm o' rain!

And the words yer spoke ! and yer money ! ” And he gave
her the half-crown back.

And another half-crown with it. And bless you ! they
made a tack

For an eating-house ; and he gave her

A right-down jolly good feed !

And bought her some tea and sugar.

“ My dear ! he did indeed ! ”

Says Grannie when she told me——“ and a shawl ! a lovely
plaid !

To keep off the rummy-tizam that I has so very bad ! ”

* * * * *

It is written that in the Hereafter

When true greatness is understood.

Those who have led their fellows

From evil unto good,

Those who have turned the wanderer

Back to the narrow way,

Will shine like the sun in Heaven !

Like the stars ! for ever and aye.

And I sometimes think in that number will be one I used
to know.

A poor old organ-woman who lived at Walthamstow.

A Midnight Struggle.

Whenever it is possible to acquire the aid of a stage and foot-lights for the recitation of this ballad, it will be found effective to arrange the "scene" as the interior of Annie Hyde's kitchen: a comfortable, orderly, homely little place, easily copied from the actual interior of many and many an artisan's home throughout our country. Gaily-patterned crockery on the dresser shelves: flowers blooming in the window: a Grandfather's Clock in its high oak case ticking in a corner: coloured prints and cheaply framed photographs upon the walls: a quaint high-backed arm-chair near the fireplace: shining pots and pans: a shining kettle on the stove: shining tins, and china dogs with staring eyes, upon the high mantel-shelf: in the foreground a whitely scoured table, heaped with washed linen piled beside a big bowl of starch.

When the curtain goes up Annie Hyde is discovered in a blue figured chintz gown and large apron, starching Dick's collars, and she continues the operation in a natural way, smiling and amused the while, during the delivery of the first portion of the ballad. Her work drops from her hands as her surprise and indignation mount, until finally, as she passes into the description of the murderous hurling of the brick-bat at the Master's little son, she pushes work and table aside, and confronts her audience from the front of the stage. Action may be diversified afterwards by her sinking into a chair at the line—

"I sat like a frozen woman,"

and through many subsequent lines, but such action is better left to the inspiration of the reciter at the moment.

It has been urged that a young renegade of Dick's pattern would not be the likely product of a Christian home ruled by

such excellent parents as Annie and Jim Hyde. To this criticism it must be urged in reply that, though truly "the Righteous are *not* forsaken," and their seed do *not*, in the long run, "beg their bread," yet instances of worthy parents and degenerate offspring may be freely multiplied from the pages of history, both sacred and profane, and from the pages of every-day life. Doubtless, when such degeneration is observable, the cause lies in some serious flaw in the parental training, hidden from our view. Few parents, or parental systems, are flawless. In the present story Annie Hyde frankly points to the source of the evil virus of discontent which she and her husband allowed to fester in their young son's mind unchecked, through a mistaken sense of the obligations of neighbourliness. These obligations, strong and far-reaching though they be, should never be allowed to weigh against a certainty of moral injury accruing from a dangerous intimacy: and this fact cannot be too earnestly impressed upon those to whom has been entrusted the sacred charge of young lives.

The evil resulting from a single pernicious conversation, or single revolutionary harangue listened to in the impressionable and malleable days of youth, would often confound us were it laid bare. By words are produced the irritated ideas which lead on to lawless deeds. The unseen arrows of words flying from mouth to mouth; the mischievous seeds of words floating from brain to brain, floating, sinking, settling, spreading the germ-poison of Envy and Ingratitude, to fructify, to swell hereafter into the rank weeds of Godlessness and Anarchy.

Watch the growth and development of poisonous ideas, passing on word-wings into the brain of Johann Most, from him by words impregnating the mind of Emma Goldman, from her again by words infecting and inflaming the thought of the wretched youth, Czolgosz, until at Buffalo black Assassination stalks forth full-grown, and the priceless life of President McKinley is sacrificed.

It is a noteworthy fact that Czolgosz's parents and relatives were peaceable and law-abiding people. His mother and sister

wept in speechless agony before him while he continued impassive and indifferent, wholly uninfluenced by their tears.

It has been urged furthermore that the action of the Hydes in giving up their own son to justice was quixotic and untrue to nature. The mother in real life would have kept the secret to herself, and would have suffered the hue and cry to pass her door unheeded. The Author desires to state that the action of the Hydes in the matter is founded upon the conduct of an Oxfordshire woman well-known to her: a noble Christian mother belonging to the working classes, who with a fortitude worthy of a Roman matron so far transcended Annie Hyde in bravery, that she actually suffered the law to take its course and to imprison her son, when—owing to various circumstances in her favour—she could, in the opinion of many qualified to judge—have “got him off.”

Should an address follow the recitation of this ballad it is suggested that the speaker should endeavour to point out plainly the miserable existence to which Annie Hyde would have condemned herself had she yielded to the temptation of concealing what she knew, and had seen. She would have entered into a bondage of enforced daily and hourly deception, more tyrannical and galling than imagination can at first picture. She would have had to sustain a rôle of studied untruthfulness in dealing with her husband, her children, her neighbours, her husband's Employers, through months and through years, which would have been hard for a convict to sustain, and intolerable to a woman of naturally free and upright spirit. Neither would she have retained the respect of the offender for whose sake she kept the secret. The boy, slinking back guilty and sullen to his home, would have quickly discerned the fact that his mother knew him to be the criminal and was screening him at the cost of honour, and he would have despised her in his heart: for be it solemnly remembered—the weak affection which places consideration of its claims before obedience to God's inviolable Law of Truth has to pay no less a penalty than this.



A Midnight Struggle.



WE are only working people, my husband and me, I
know,

But we've tried to train our children in the way
that they should go :

We've done our best to teach them not to want what they
haven't got,

But to grow up law-abiding, and contented with their lot :

And when our youngest, Dickie—not thirteen until March—
Sat and talked like a wild young . . . Fenian ! as I was
a-mixing starch,

It nearly knocked me backwards !

“Mother !” he says to me.

“I hates to see you working. Ain't you sick of work ?”
says he.

“Ain't you sick,” he says, “of the treadmill ? and of wearin'
that old blue chintz ?

Why can't you have a satin, like Mrs. Arthur Prince ?”
(That's the Wife of the Head of our Factory !)

“Well,” says I, “When you earn enough
To buy me a satin, Dickie, I'll wear it instead of stuff.
Till then, when I'm starching your collars, I prefer to wear
what I've got.

And as for hating working ! I would rather work than not.”
“Then I say you *shouldn't*, mother !” says the boy quite
fierce and hot.

"I say you should ride in your carriage, and live on the fat of the land!

Why should Mother Prince, and her young 'uns, eat salmon!—an' all that's grand,

And we eat all that's common, like herrin's, and sprats, an' mess——?"

"Dickie!" I says to him, "Dickie! Stop talking such foolishness!

Mrs. Prince is the sweetest lady that ever was born and bred.

And you speak respectful of her, or you'll find yourself in bed!

She's the wife of our Employer, and she OUGHT to live different to us . . .

And I've no wish for her carriage, for I'd much rather ride in a bus,

As it's safer:" I says: "And it's cheerful: and to quarrel with your food,

Is ungrateful to your mother, and won't do you any good.

As for wanting to eat salmon . . . maybe it's very nice:

I can't say much about it, for I never had it but twice:

But this I will say, Dickie, if you want the truth from me,

Give me a Yarmouth bloater—with my breakfast, or my tea,

Far before all the salmon that ever swam in the sea!

So say no more about it!"

But the boy *would have* his say.

His little face blazed scarlet. He'd sweep 'em all away!

That's what he'd do to Employers! And he'd sweep up all they'd got!

Old Mother Prince and her young 'uns, he jolly well hated the lot!

He'd chuck her out of her carriage : and her brat—as went
ridin' by,
Cocked up on his Shetland pony—he'd just like to black
his eye !

It set me all of a tremble ! I didn't know
where to turn !

I couldn't tell starch from treacle ! “ Dickie ! ”—I looked
at him stern.

“ I've taught you your Catechism——”

“ Oh ! ” he says “ that's all rot ! ”

“ What !! ” I says—“ You ! my youngest ! And to speak
as you ought not !

You'll just walk out this minute ! ”

And he saw I meant it. And went.
But I stood and shook all over, with fear, and astonishment.
I couldn't laugh about it. I knew where he'd learnt such
talk.

There were boys I didn't care for, who followed a man
who'd walk,

And shout, in the Park on Sundays. An idle, frothy fool,
Who raved against Law and Religion. And ever since
Dick left school,

And was started out at errands, these boys made a chum of
him.

And because I knew their mothers, and their fathers worked
'longside Jim,

I thought 'twould be unfriendly, and unneighbourly, to
make

Our son give up their friendship:—but I made a great
mistake.

If a boy has Small-pox near us, we parents know what to
say.

We warn our children of it. We *make* them keep away.
But the Small-pox of Bad Companions is deadlier, any day,
And we take that—very easy. We think it seems unkind
To avoid this man, or that woman. And we're wrong, my
friends, you'll find.

"*Come out, and be ye separate!*" says the Bible. If we're sure
A companionship is dangerous, whether we're rich or poor,
We should guard our children from it, as we'd guard them
from the Plague!

I know about what I'm talking. My words are not light, or
vague.

'Twas three days after Dick's outburst, that Mrs. Prince
drove through
Our side street, to the Factory, as she often used to do.
And riding behind her carriage, in his little coat and cap,
Was her eldest—Master Charlie: the nicest little chap
That ever had a mother: not more than eight years old:
And the Factory "hands" adored him, to a man, so we
were told.

As he passed an open corner—I could see it from the
back,
Where I was pegging clothes out—a shadow sprang up,
black!
Against the light!—and a brickbat whizzed heavy through
the air
And struck him on the forehead, just past the temple, there,
And he fell from his saddle, headlong, on the road, like a
lump of lead,
And lay with the blood a-streaming—and I thought . . .
the child . . . was dead!

They brought him into *our* cottage, and laid him on the ground.

“I’ll never rest!” says his father, “till the scoundrel has been found

And given up to Justice!”

His mother knelt by his side.

“O, my boy!” she says. “My darling!—Mrs. Hyde,” she says, “Mrs. Hyde!

Can there be a human creature so wicked, so black, so base, As to do this deed on purpose?”

I looked her in the face,
And I couldn’t . . . speak . . . in answer

When they took the child away—
(He was stunned, not killed, not MURDERED! Thank God for His love that day)—

I sat like a frozen woman. I could neither sob nor pray:—

Why was I dumb in her presence?—Because I knew the one

Who had done that deed of horror . . . was my Own . . .
my youngest son.

I’d recognised the Shadow that hurled the heavy brick.
Trust a mother to know her children. ’Twas Dick, I knew ’twas Dick!

And no one else had seen him! Strange! And yet it was true!

As the hours crept on, I learnt it. Not another creature knew.

Only me! his mother. His Mother!! O Lord! what must I do . . .

Speak the truth? Give him up to Justice? See him stand in the Court? in the Dock?

Send my boy to prison . . . Prison ! . . . hear the neighbours jeer and mock,
 Pointing him out as a jail-bird . . . Could I live through the shame and pain ?
 Could I ever hold my head up, could I ever be happy again ?

* * * * *

Have any of you been tempted ? Do you know what it is to hear
 A devil-voice within you, speak eager, and low, and clear ?
 Then you know how *I* was tempted, through the whole of one awful night,
 To lock my lips in silence : to seal the secret tight.
 If I told—said the voice—it was ruin ! Ruin for Jim and me,
 And our children. They would send Jim . . . away from the Factory . . .
 In disgrace . . . ! Was it fair to my husband ? . . . fair to the son I bore
 That his young life should be branded by the shame of a *prison* door ?
 No !
 The rewards were out ! They were posted ! everywhere ! north and south !
 Let them rot on the walls ! . . . none should ever drag the truth from his Mother's mouth !

I panted—there—in the darkness—and outside the house, the rain
 Rustled and hissed like a serpent, licking the window-pane.
 Serpents and devils all round me, strangling my inmost soul—

Then . . . was it vision or fancy? . . . through the rain
came a sudden roll
Of solemn Organ music : and a strain of melody
Like angels' harps in Heaven . . . and words! . . . I could
hear them! "*He*
That loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."

I might have been shot . . . Christ in Heaven! The
words were so old! so new!
I had known them, and heard them, and read them, and so
have you!—and you!
But there're moments when words of the Bible pierce like
a sword—a knife—
And we understand their meaning for the first time in our life!

I told it all to my husband. Ah! there're not many
wives
Who have such a Guide, and Leader, and Helper, through
their lives
As I have got in Jimmy! Why, half the wives I know
Are better than their husbands! And 'twas never meant to
be so.
Now Jimmy is, and was always, a thousand times better
than me.

When I'd told the tale, he says slowly—as simple as
can be—
"We must do our duty, Annie: there're no two ways
about *that*."

We had Dick in before us. And he owned to it, plain
and flat.
We were thankful he did. It was something—that our boy
didn't shuffle and lie.

And I think he was frightened and sorry, though there
wasn't a tear in his eye.

We wrote to the Master, and told him, that we had
found the one
Who flung the murderous brickbat that struck his little
son.
And . . . we'd bring him . . . Saturday evening. We
walked there. Jim and me,
And Dick walked in between us. Oh! the grief and the
misery!
Of that silent walk.

We were taken to a room where the Master sat
Behind a great oak table. There were lights, I think, but
that

I couldn't tell you surely. All I could look at there,
Were two . . . two tall Policemen! standing behind his
chair.

When Dick looked up and saw them, he turned as white as
a sheet.

I began to speak to the Master, but my heart so shook and
beat,

It seemed nothing but a whisper :—

“Sir!” I says, “’Twouldn't be right
That we should try to deceive you. The boy we've brought
to-night,

Is our son, Sir . . . and he did it. It's our fault, as you
may say.

He's got with bad companions, and we've let them lead him
astray,

When we should have stopped it——” I struggled, to
speak as I ought to do.

“You helped us when we were in trouble—you, and your Lady too.

I’ve not forgotten that Christmas. And this—I know it’s true—

Is a black return for your kindness. I’ve nothing, Sir, to say.

I don’t know any reason why the Police shouldn’t take him away . . .

Only . . . his father’s honest . . . we are poor, but there’s never been

Disgrace brought on our family . . . Sir! I’m not trying to screen

My boy : he did it—on purpose : I say it, though he’s my son. He ought to bear his punishment . . . only, Sir! . . . he’s my youngest one! . . .

He was good when he was little. He’s said his prayers at my knee

Ever since he could speak. And I love him! I love him the best of my three!—

God forgive me if it’s wicked!—and I’d rather see him lie In his coffin, in his coffin, and the funeral goin’ by, Than I’d see him sent to—Prison—— I would, Sir——” And suddenly

The room and the lights went round me. I couldn’t see Mr. Prince.

I’d never done it before, and I’ve never done it since, But I fainted—— Sank down senseless, on the floor, before them all

When I came to myself, Jim was with me, and I was out in the hall

With the night-wind blowing fresh-like. Jim’s face was so pale! so pale!

"Jimmy," I whispered, "Jimmy! Have they sent our boy to jail?"

"No!" he says. "No! They forgive him. And I'm kept on just the same.

The boy is to have a flogging. But they've spared us and him, the shame

Of the dock and the prison, Annie."

Oh! no one could ever tell,
But one who was drowning, slowly, at the bottom of a well,
And was drawn up to light and safety, what I felt as I heard him speak!

No. I could never tell you: if I tried for a day, or a week.

And Mrs. Prince, and the Master, they were wonderful kind to me.

They took me in by their fire, and gave me some lovely tea,
And spoke so noble-hearted.

It's many years ago.

And many things have happened since then, of joy and woe,
To me as a wife and a mother. But I never shall know again

Such a night as that night of struggle—when outside the house, the rain

Rustled and hissed like a serpent, licking the window-pane.

* * * * *

Souls of the sorely tempted, strike out for the True and the Right.

And Hands will reach through the darkness, and lift you . . . up! . . . to the Light!

My Daughter-in-Law.

The scene between the two women, which forms the climax of this story, viz., the struggle between the victim of alcoholic frenzy and her deliverer, was enacted in real life in a populous quarter of the East End of London. The story was narrated in the hearing of the Author by the wife of the Clergyman in whose parish it actually took place, who vouched for the inspiring fact that the unhappy inebriate became afterwards one of the most energetic and reliable of parish workers in the Cause of Temperance.

"According to your faith be it unto you."

The over-powering effect produced on the brain of those suffering from alcoholism, by the mere scent of intoxicants, is no exaggerated picture. Remarkable instances have been brought under the Author's notice. An exemplification of it has been marvellously described at greater length and in fuller detail than can be set forth in a ballad, by the American writer, Mr. Charles Sheldon, in the well-known book, "In His Steps."



My Daughter-in-Law.



SEE folks start a-smiling
When I give this title out.
They think I'm going to tell them
How a quarrel came about!

They think there must be quarrels, an' snap, an' scratch,
an' claw,

When a woman tells a story about her daughter-in-law.

Maybe it's that way sometimes,
With some, but this I know—
When my son, Harry, married,
I never found it so.

For Nettie, Harry's sweetheart, Nettie, my son's wife,
Is the best and bravest woman I've known in all my life!

And there's someone—Bella Tyson,
Smart—is her married name,
Who thinks of her as I do,
And loves her just the same.

And how she came to love her I'll tell you, for it's *true*:
Though strange as any story you've ever listened to!

* * * * *

Nettie was fond of Bella
For she'd known her from a child.
But the girl was very flighty
And troublesome and wild.

Flirted and flirted her head off, in nonsense and pretence.
Pretty? Oh, yes. She was pretty. But what's beauty
without sense?

She pretended she meant to marry
The Lancer, Johnny Lee.
That poor brave lad of twenty,
Who died so gallantly
Giving his life for Harry, in those terrible days of woe
When the war broke out in Africa, and our soldiers had
to go.

I remember the scene at the station
The day they went away.
What Nettie was like all through it
No words could ever say.
Strong, I had always guessed her, and good, without a
doubt:
But you don't know a woman's mettle till trouble brings it
out.

I tried, I *tried* to be brave.
But, oh! I couldn't speak.
"Grannie," she says, "No crying!"
And she stooped and kissed my cheek.
"You're the Mother of a soldier!" And she held up her
handsome head—
"And I am his Wife. God bless him!" And never a tear
she shed.

There was drinking on the platform.
Horrible! Yet it's true.
The people were "treating" the soldiers.
And men, aye! and women, too,

Were reeling, and shouting, and dancing, too tipsy to know
their shame.

It was never so in the old days : may it never again be the
same :

But the very memory of it scorches the mind like flame.

Bella was there with the wildest.

Screaming as if she was mad.

More crazy with excitement

Than meaning to be bad.

She held out a glass of whiskey to her sweetheart, Johnny
Lee.

“Drink it to keep up your courage! to keep up your pluck!”
says she.

And Nettie caught her arm back!

“Do you want to cloud his brain?

For God’s sake part from him sober.

You never may see him again.

When English courage is Whiskey!” she says, “*May our
soldiers fail!*”

And she swept the glass out of her hand and smashed it on
the rail!

And yet she’s the gentlest creature.

“Oh, Bella!” I heard her say,

“Have a last word with him, quiet.

Tell him you’ll think . . . and pray.

He’ll be gone in another minute.” And that minute the
whistle blew!

Harry caught up his youngest, and the babe began to coo,

And lay her little fingers

On the straps of his kharki coat.

He couldn’t bless his children

For the sudden sob in his throat.

But his wife . . . She stood up and kissed him, with a face
as bright as the day.

"Into the Keeping of God," she said. And so she sent him
away.

Well. I must hurry the story.

The war raged fierce and hot.

And Harry, my son, was wounded.

And Johnny Lee . . . was shot!

And Bella thought she was sorry: and said it would break
her heart:

And four months after, or sooner, she married Albert Smart.

I've nothing to say against him.

He'd a head just like a mop.

But he owned an honest character,

And served in a Butcher's shop.

They'd a pretty home at starting, not far from Nettie's door.

And Nettie saw them constant for eighteen months or more,

And stayed with Bella, and nursed her,

When her little baby came.

She was up and out in a fortnight,

And seemed to be much the same

As ever she'd been. When one day, as Nettie chanced to go

Past the Public at the corner they called "The Barley Mow,"

Who should come out but Bella!

And Nettie gave a start,

And stared at her astonished—

"What!" she says—"Bella Smart!

You to come out of a Public!" And Bella tossed her head.

"Only something to keep my strength up, now baby's here,"
she said.

And Nettie spoke to her, soft-like.

“My dear,” she says, “my dear,
There’s no strength for a mother
In spirits, nor yet in beer.

It’s milk you want when you’re nursing. Why,” she says,
“Look at me !

I’m a teetotal mother. And stronger I couldn’t be !”
(Nettie stands five feet seven. And is like a rose to see !)

And then she says to her, serious.

“Forgive me for speaking so.
But inside the door of a Public
No woman should ever go.

It’s bad enough to see men there. For a woman it’s sheer
disgrace.”

And Bella flew in a temper. And insulted her to her face.
And told her to mind her business, and keep her tongue in
its place.

What happened after that meeting
Perhaps you scarce could think :
Unless you know the power
The wicked power of Drink.

’Twas the wretchedest thing, and the saddest, that ever
came to pass

In the life of a young married woman. And yet it’s as
common as grass

There’s a wonderful verse in the Bible
For one as understands.

“*The wise woman buildeth her house, and the
foolish
Plucketh it down with her hands.*”

Bella was one of the foolish, and she plucked it down brick
by brick.

And the English People helped her : for they set the beer-
shops thick

As peas about her pathway.

She might struggle main and might,
But whenever she crossed her threshold

She was tempted left and right.

And she didn't know *how* to struggle, for she didn't know
how to *pray*.

And when the devil met her, she was nothing but so much
hay,

Or stubble, for the burning.

It's pitiful to tell

How she pulled her home to pieces.

How she pawned what she couldn't sell.

How she drank up her husband's wages. How, when he
tried to stop

From giving her his money, she went outside the shop

And bawled and swore--till the master

Said he couldn't have such scenes !

And though sorry to do it--dismissed him !

And you know what dismissal means.

The man went home that evening, and heard a choking
sound.

And there was his twelve-month baby, a lying on the
ground,

With its little mouth a-bleeding

And a needle across it's throat !

The mother was drunk, and had left it,

And taken no more note,

Of what would happen to it than if it had been a fly
A crawling on the carpet! 'Twas a marvel it didn't die!

He ran with the child to Nettie.

Half crazed, poor chap, no doubt.

And with her fingers, and a tea-spoon,

They got the needle out.

Then he took himself and his baby, to his mother's, near
Salisbury Plain,

And wrote to his wife and told her he'd never come home
again.

Nettie heard she'd got the letter,

And she went to see her straight.

What the place was like you can't fancy!

There wasn't a cup, a plate,

That Bella hadn't broken! Not a pane of glass, not
one,

That she hadn't smashed to shivers when her drunken fits
were on.

She was sober then, poor creature,

As Nettie called her name.

Crouched by the empty cradle

In an agony of shame.

"I've lost my child and my husband," she says, "and I
want to die."

And Nettie knelt beside her—and I know she spoke
tenderly—

"Bella!" she says, "you may want to,

But I don't at all think you will.

Drink's quick enough to rob you.

It's very slow to kill.

You've got to live : and *live different*." And Bella wrung her hands—

"Oh, help me, Nettie, help me. I'm held down with iron bands . . ."

I can't resist the craving . . .

For Christ's sake, set me free!

I love my home and my husband,

And my little babe," says she,

"It's the Drink that made me wicked, made me leave my pretty lamb . . ."

And Nettie says, "Are you in earnest?" And she sobs,
"I am! I am!"

"Then," says Nettie—"I WILL help you."

Friends. You have heard it said,

It's harder to rescue a woman

Who drinks, than to wake the dead.

Meaning the task is hopeless. I come to tell this tale

Of what one woman did for another, that none may ever fail

In Faith, and Hope, and Courage, when facing desperate odds

In the battle against liquor. For the fight is not our's, but

God's!

My daughter-in-law took Bella

To live with her, that day.

She could manage it, she told me,

As her husband was still away

On service in South Africa. 'Twas a noble thing to do!

She removed her from bad companions, and kept her close
in view.

And Bella turned teetotal for quite a month or two.

And then came one of those outbursts
That mark the disease of Drink.
That must be met, and CONQUERED,
Or the victim's doomed to sink.
And *then* it was Nettie helped her, in the hour of her sorest
need,
With a Courage more than human, and a Faith that was
Faith indeed !

The two were working together
In Nettie's little back-room.
'Twas lovely summer weather,
And the back-yard was a-bloom
With flowers : when through the window—as the wind had
set that way—
Instead of the scent of roses, and honeysuckle spray,
Came a whiff of beer and spirits
From the tap-room of "The Bell."
Bella turned round, and smelt it,
And it acted as a spell !
It reached and fired her senses
Like a messenger from Hell !
The craving woke within her : the horrible raging thirst—
Thank the Lord that you've never known it—and as swift
as ever she durst
She laid her work by—crafty ! and sidled towards the door :
"Bella !" says Nettie, quickly, "What are you going for ?"
She guessed the truth in a second—Bella was past her
chair—
"I'm going for BEER !" she flung out—"and you stop me if
you dare !"

Nettie sprang to the door and locked it,
And took away the key.

The woman leapt like a tigress,
Savagely, furiously.

She'd tear the key from her pocket! she'd tear the clothes
from her back!

She'd get at the drink or do murder! . . . her face went
wild and black,

And Nettie stood there, stedfast;

And it's often seemed to me,

Her face must have looked like an Angel's

In its beautiful bravery.

"Bella!" she says, "you can't hurt me. Your strength is
nothing to mine.

I've the strength of ten thousand women," she says,—
"for it's strength Divine!

I'll guard you from your enemy.

You shall never pass this door.

Good is stronger than evil,

And shall be, for evermore!

You are armed with the power of the devil—who would
drag you under the sod.

But I stand, and I face you, Bella, in the Power of the
Spirit of God!

. And you can do nothing against me."

The woman tore her gown.

For a minute they grappled together.

But Nettie held her down,

As she writhed, and foamed, and cursed her. 'Twas a
terrible sight to see

While the paroxysm lasted: for as it was told to me,

The poor soul rolled in a frenzy,
And beat her head on the floor !
In her madness to get at liquor . . .
And after an hour or more
She was thanking her deliverer with her tears a streaming
down,
Like some glad rescued creature snatched from a ruined
town
When an earthquake wrecks the houses. And marvellous
to say
From ruin she was rescued, in very truth, that day !
The force of the craving was broken. And it slowly died
away !

* * * * *

What is there more to tell you ?
Only this . . . There's a house I know
Where a pretty young mother is singing,
As she bustles to and fro.
There's a new baby in the cradle, screened careful from the
light.
*And there's a toddling youngster never out of his mother's
sight.*
There's a splendid lot of furniture
Polished with so much pride,
You can see your face in the chair-backs,
Whenever you step inside.
There's a table spread with plenty every day throughout
the year.
And no alcohol upon it : but good water, fresh and clear.
There's a husband sitting happy.
True : his head is like a mop !


But he's always joking and laughing :

And he's back in the Butcher's shop !

And there's sometimes a woman . . . praying—as she never
prayed before—

Who calls down a million blessings on the head of my
Daughter-in-law.

James Peglar.

“H, mother!” says my Sally, as she sat and sipped
her tea,
“May little Daisy Peglar come to Sunday
School with me?”

“Surely,” says I, without thinking: for the child was lone
and lorn,

And had never known her mother—who died when she was
born—

And I thought 'twould be a pleasure and would cheer the
little thing

To hear the Bible stories, and learn the hymns, and sing.

But I reckoned without her father! when I gave her leave
to go.

And the very next evening, Monday, he came and told us so!

He was Foreman at our Factory: and was sharp, and
knew a lot.

He'd had a deal more schooling than my Jim ever got.

He used to speak at Meetings, and put the others right!

He sat beside our table, and he talked to us that night—

Smoking his pipe with Jimmy—he talked as you've never
heard!

A Sunday School was poison!! If we actually preferred

To have our child taught rubbish, we could do as we
thought wise:

He wouldn't let his Daisy learn superstitious lies,
Not while his name was Peglar !

Jim stares with both his eyes !
" Well ! " he says, " we send Sally where there ain't no
rubbish taught :

Naught but the simple Bible——" He cut Jim pretty short.
That was just the mischief of it. He'd not row in the
Parson's boat.

He wouldn't have the Bible shoved down his daughter's
throat.

He'd never been the better for the Bible he could swear,
And he'd train his child without it.

I got up from my chair.
" Sir ! " I says, " Mr. Peglar. You're our Foreman, I'm
aware.

And I've no wish to insult you, for civility's our rule,
And likewise you're a neighbour—but," I says, " you're
a FOOL !

Is your child to learn her duty to her home, herself, and you ?
Do you want her good ? and happy ? "—" Yes ! " he says.
" Of course I do.

And she'll BE that without the Bible."—" No ! " I says.
" She will NOT !

You're our Foreman, Mr. Peglar, but you're talking . . .
simple *rot* !

You might as well sow tin-tacks, and expect a row of peas,
As preach such one-eyed doctrines and think that out of
these

There's happiness a coming ! To keep God's Word away
Is to keep your child in a cellar from the air and the light
of day.

What does the Psalm say ? Listen ! ‘ Thy Word is a Lamp
to my feet.’

And a Lamp it is : and a Lantern : as we jostle in Life’s
dark street.

All honesty, all honour, all truth, all purity.

Is found in the Holy Bible, God’s Message to you and me.

I’m nothing at all to boast of,” I says, “but this is true :—

There’s not a spark of goodness in anything I do,

Not a kind act to a neighbour, not so much as a pleasant
look,

That I don’t owe to the teaching I’ve drawn from that
sacred Book,

And I’d die for what I’m saying. And though hearing it
makes you wild,

If you *dare* to keep back the Bible from the soul of your
motherless child,

You will rue the day you do it in your stubbornness and
pride,

As sure as your name *is* Peglar, and as sure as my name is
Hyde !”

And then I said “ Good evening : ” for I did feel
that upset

I couldn’t stay there longer. No. And I shan’t forget
How the children cried about it when they heard they
couldn’t go

To Sunday School together. And Sally brought her row
Of Sunday cards for Daisy, and picked her out the best.

’Twas the picture of a Shepherd with a lamb upon His
breast :

And the old sweet words—“ Come unto Me and I will give
you rest.”

*

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There's a deal to tell in this story. And yet I think I ought
To tell it full and faithful, and not try to cut it short.

* * * * *

That little Daisy Peglar grew up as my children grew.
As pretty a girl as ever I saw, and I've seen a few.
Her father lived to spoil her, and humour her, night and day.
He thought he could make her happy by letting her have
her way.
She might spend as she liked, and do as she liked, and live
to enjoy.

And that's not good for a young one : be it a girl or a boy.

She wasn't taught the Bible. He had his way in that.
Nor was there a place o' Worship I ever saw them at.

We used to pass them Sundays. They going for a walk.
We going to Church. And if ever you've seen a pink rose
on a stalk !

A blooming in light ! that was Daisy—as she hung on her
father's arm !

Her hair a golden glory ! and her blue eyes like a charm !
And many's the time my heart's ached to think that pretty
child,

Who hung on his arm so loving, and looked in his face and
smiled,

Would have nothing at all to steer her where the breakers
of evil foam,

But the love she had for her father and the love she had for
home,

And that isn't enough to steer by : strong though it is, and good :
For human love, by itself, the best of it understood,

In the Breakers of Temptation . . . will smash . . . like
rotten wood.

And she met temptation early. She worked at the millinery,
For a year or so, apprenticed, as Sally had to be,
And the two young things were friendly as did me good to see.
And it came about one summer, a man loafed round our way,
Who made his money touting, and betting, we heard say.
A foreign chap to look at, but handsome—I will allow.
And Daisy she picked up with him (goodness knows when or how).
And she passed him on to Sally.

Now me and Jim, you know,
Don't make acquaintance that way ; and we told Sally so.
“ But he gave me a brooch,” says Sally,” “ and he's given Daisy, six !
And he says he could make her a lady.” And Jim says,
“ Fiddlesticks !
Could he make her an honest woman ? It's come out pretty clear
He don't earn his living honest. Now Sally,” he says,
“ my dear,
You're to drop him from this minute. So do as you are bid.
And I'll give a hint to Peglar, to warn him.” And he did.
And Peglar spoke to Daisy, and forbade her to walk or speak
With this flashy Jack-a-dandy she'd barely known a week.

Friends ! you would scarce believe it,—but the long and the short is this :—
She ran away from her father without a farewell kiss.
And under that fellow's tempting, she robbed him, left and right,
Of all she could lay her hands on !

He came to us that night
And he sat like a man with the palsy.

And I durstn't speak a word
I felt that sorry for him. But I think he must have heard
A Voice which rolled in thunder out of the Word of God——
"Fathers . . . bring up your children in the nurture of the Lord."
And the fruit of Bible training was our Sally, sitting there,
Sweet and safe, with her sewing, in her Grannie's rocking-
chair.

* * * * *

They said about our Factory, James Peglar's hair went white
In the four and twenty hours that followed his daughter's
flight.

But he kept his trouble secret, and hidden out of sight,
And we didn't ask him questions.

But friends, an evening came
That's stamped upon my memory in prints of living flame.
An evening when James Peglar, and me, stood side by side,
By a beggar's bed in the Workhouse. A woman who wept
and cried

And asked him to forgive her. A wretched fallen wreck,
With a little starving baby that cuddled to her neck.

And I shouldn't have known it was Daisy. But her father
knew, and fell

Down on his knees by her bedside, and sobbed, as I couldn't
tell,

And kissed her. And she gasped out—"Father . . . I've
been in Hell . . .

And I've found the way to Heaven . . . by this——" and
she'd got to show

The little card that Sally had given her years ago.
The picture of a Shepherd with a lamb upon His breast,
And the mighty words—"Come unto Me and I will give
you rest."

"I found those words in the Bible . . . and wonderful
words beside . . .

And I clung to them," she whispered, "and they saved me
from suicide . . ."

And then she lay like a dead thing. But just before she died,
She lifted up her baby with her dying strength, and cried—
"Oh! somebody give my baby what his mother never had.
Oh! teach my boy the Bible and save him from being bad."
"I promise I will," said Peglar.

And the woman died at rest.
And we laid her in her coffin, with that picture on her breast.

* * * * *

This tale's not easy telling, but it ends more happily.
There's a sight I often witness in a house near our Factory,
When I look in of an evening. An old man sits in his
chair,
And his Grandson stands beside him. A little chap, with
hair

The colour of his mother's, and his mother's lovely eyes.
And he spells out a Psalm from the Bible in a way that's a
surprise!

And when the reading's over James Peglar looks at me—
As he gives the child a penny and sets him on his knee—
"It's better late than never: it's better by far," says he!



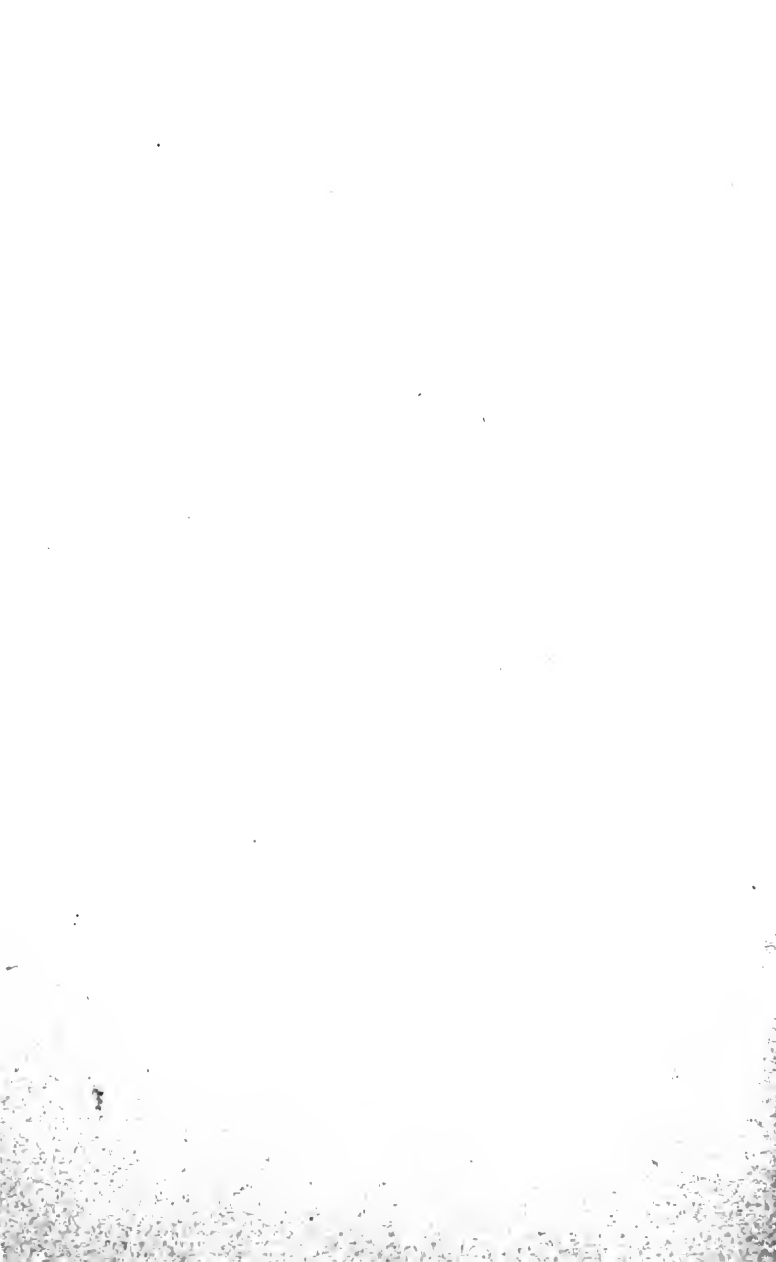
A Soldier's Son.

The slight incident in the following ballad is deemed worthy of record inasmuch as it really took place in the circle of the Author's immediate acquaintance.

The original of Harry the Second was a little boy (grandson of an Indian Cavalry officer well known in his day), who on being awakened by screams outside the house at night, rushed downstairs to rescue his mother from what he imagined must be impending danger!

His actual words were:—

“ Was it Indians, Mummy ? ”



A Soldier's Son.



T'S funny how Time passes !
It seems but yesterday,
That Harry was a toddle
A-tumbling everyway !

And now there are Harry's children climbing about my knees,
And searching in my pockets for Goodies ! if you please !

It isn't many I give them.

I don't hold with suck, suck, suck,

It paves the way—to my thinking—

For sucking Gin, and muck,

When they have grown a bit older. And it wastes the
pennies too.

Still I keep some sweets for bed-time ! as Grannies always do !

“ What has you dot in you's pottet ? ”

Says Harry's little son :

Smiling at me, that artful !

With his brown eyes full of fun.

That was when he was three, and a Beauty ! A Picture to
see, and to praise !

And we called him Harry the Second, for he'd just his
father's ways !

Jim says I'm the vainest Grannie

He ever come across.

And I say I'm only truthful!

Because you know, of course,
The boy is a perfect wonder! he is the most splendid child
That ever was seen or heard of! And I'm not a talking wild,

For I'll tell you a thing that happened

When he was only four :

And his father, my son, was fighting

In the Boer and British war.

The day the Lancers started—we were back by the Engine
shed—

Harry lifted the boy in his arms and stroked his little dark
head,

(They cropped him like a soldier)

And says to him—"You must be good.

And take care of Mother for Daddy."

And that baby understood,

For he gazed at his father, and nodded, as solemn as a book.
And when we left the station, and scarce knew where to look

To hide our tears from each other,

He hopped at his mother's side.

And patted her hand, important,

Quite happy and satisfied.

(He was wonderful fond of his mother). And says he—"I
wants a sword.

I wants a sword lite father." Just of his own accord!

"So I can '*tect*' you, Mummy!"

'Protect' he meant. And he made

Me and his mother buy one.

And every night he laid

The little tin toy by his bed-side : and sometimes his chubby
hand

Would be grasping the hilt of it firmly, as he entered
slumber-land.

* * * *

One night, so Nettie told me,
(She's Harry's wife, you know)

Her little ones were sleeping,
And she sat her down to sew.

Thinking, dear heart, and praying—for her husband far
away.

The hour was close on midnight. And the moon shone
bright as day.

And all the street was silent.

When suddenly—wild and clear—
The most awful screams of horror
That ever filled her ear,

Rang out across the stillness ! Terrible ghastly cries,
Echoing over the house-tops, under the quiet skies.

She started up in a panic.

Where was it ? What was it for ?
Her first thought was her children——
She rushed to the open door,

And at that very second she caught another note,
Her little Harry shouting at the top of his baby throat——

“ Don't you be fy'ightened, Mummy !
I'se tumming ! I'se tumming down !
I'se tumming to tect you, Mummy ! ” . . .
And clutching his little gown,

Holding his toy sword, valiant, in one uplifted arm,
All in a startled hurry to save his mother from harm,

Into the room he tumbled !

And there ! . . . as Nettie said—

As she picked him up and hugged him

And carried him back to bed,

You never saw anything like it ! He'd been wakened by
the screams,

And had scrambled over his cot-rail, as you may say—in his
dreams,

To go and take care of his mother !

“ *Was it the Boers ?* ” says he,

As she tucked him up in the blankets

And kissed him tenderly.

But what it was, or wasn't, they don't know to this day.
For as sudden as it started the screaming died away.

It might have been drunken brawling,

Or a wounded dog, or a cat.

But as I says to Nettie,

What does it matter for that !

It's the heart of the child that matters ! Did you ever
know such a one ?

There's a boy to be proud of ! And there's a Soldier's Son !

The End of Mullins.



HIS is the end of Mullins.

Me and Jim were sitting at tea.

We were just as snug and cosy as ever we could
be.

The room was like a picture. The fire was blazing red.
The old clock was a-ticking, as it did when we were wed.
The kettle was a-singing a song of cheerfulness.
And we'd tea-cakes of my making, and a dish of watercress!
The cat was on the hearth-rug, a-basking in the blaze,
And Jim he says—"Why, Mother! This is like our early
days:

Only you and me together!—"Ah!" I says, "it's long
ago

Since you and me first started. We've had our share, I
know,

Of tears and troubles, Jimmy: but now we've peace and
rest.

And I almost think the ending of married life is best.
Better than the beginning. And yet that's happy, too,
When a wife has such a husband as I have had in you.
You were a dear good husband through all our married
years . . . "

And if you can believe it, if I didn't fall to tears!

And Jim sits laughing at me!

"Come, Mother! We can't have this!"

And he leans across the table and gives me such a kiss
He knocks the sugar over ! And we both must pick it up.
And that sets me a-laughing !——

“ Well ! ” says I, as I fills his cup—
“ How folks can live unmarried is more than I can tell !
Now look,” I says, “ at Mullins : like an old crab in a
shell !

He’s that crabby and three-cornered from living all alone,
He’s no more heart or feeling than a piece of paving-
stone——”

And just as I was speaking, at the minute—you may say,
Who should walk in but Mullins ! in his usual dismal way,
For he never walked in cheerful.

We asked him to sit down.
And I passed him a slice of tea-cake that was toasted a
lovely brown——

And he looked across at the window (there *was* just a touch
of fog)

“ Here’s weather ! ” he says. “ Here’s weather ! ’Tisn’t
fit for a cat or a dog,

Much less a human being ! ” We only smiled, because
He would always sit and grumble whatever the weather was.
It was either too dry, or too rainy, or else too cold, or too
hot.

“ We’re so happy,” I says, “ we don’t notice, if the weather
is foggy or not.

And you’d be the same, Mr. Mullins, if you didn’t live all
alone

Without a creature to speak to——.” “ Yes ! ” says Jim,
“ You’ve a house of your own.

Why don’t you get married, Mullins ? ”

It’s just like Jim, you know,

To blurt things out in that way! And Mullins answers
slow,

Sort of sour and sarcastic—"Not me! You don't catch *me*,
Giving up my independence for a wife and family.

The game aint worth the candle!—meaning no offence to
you."

"Not worth it, Mr. Mullins. Come!" I says, "that isn't
true.

Think of a tidy woman who'd make the house look bright,
And give you a smiling welcome when you went home at
night.

She MIGHT have a bit of money! And that's not bad in a
wife——."

"And she MIGHT," he snaps, "have a Temper! and a
tongue like a carving-knife!"

"Well: she might: but it isn't likely. And think of the
joys of life.

Think of the children's laughter, to cure you of the
dumps——."

"Yes!" he says, "think of Measles! And Chicken-pox!
And Mumps!

And Croup! And Scarlatina!——." "But goodness
gracious, man!

They don't have them all together!!" "Well," he sighs,
"I think they can.

AND DO! And then there's schoolin'. And findin' them a
trade.

Oh, no! I wouldn't marry. No. Not if I was paid!"
And he shakes his head that mournful, 'twas as good as any
play!

"Ah!" I says, "Mr. Mullins: you'll change your mind
some day."

And Jim puts in quite solemn—— “ When all is said and done,

You’ll find it’s truth in Scripture, that two are better than one.

That’s how I’ve found it, Mullins. It’s wonderful to share The rough and the smooth together : the black days and the fair.

And it’s wonderful, I tell you, when you are growing old, And see your children’s children, to find you still can hold

The dear brave hand that helped you through all life’s toil and strain.”

And he looked at me so loving, I nearly cried again !

And Mullins sits there, silent, a-stirring of his tea.

Then all of a sudden he gulps it ! as hasty as can be !

And walks out . . . never giving a look at Jim or me !

“ Jim ! ” I said, “ something tells me, that Mullins ought to wed.

And ’twould be an act of mercy to find him a wife,” I said.

And Jim laughed——“ Annie ! Annie ! you women are all alike.

You love to make a match up ! But you’ll find this match won’t strike !

And you’d better by half not try it . . . though I guess you *will* ! ” And I did !

And I’ll tell you all about it.

I was lifting my copper lid,

Early, the very next morning, when I thought of Fairy Crump.

Her mother called her Fairy——though the girl was as heavy a lump

As ever sat and said nothing! But that was her mother's way.

A silly-minded woman as you'd meet in a summer's day!
Still she and me were neighbours. And Fairy, she could cook:

And starch and iron splendid: so I thought she'd do. And I took

A mortal lot of trouble to get Mullins and her to meet.
(You can go for years without meeting though you live in the self-same street.)

We got them to tea one Sunday. And the like you've never heard!

They sat each side our table, and they never spoke one word!

Me and Jim did all the talking! Fairy stared down on the floor.

And Mullins stared up at the ceiling. When they'd gone, and we'd shut the door,

Jim said it was worse than a funeral! An' me . . . what with smiling about . . .

And trying to keep things going . . . I was fairly tired out!
Still I wouldn't be discouraged, so I had another try.

I knew a widow person of the name of Mrs. Rye,
Who kept a little toy-shop. She wasn't over young.
But then—no more was Mullins! And I knew she'd a merry tongue,

And wouldn't sit mum like Fairy. But when she and Mullins met,

The pace at which she chattered I never shall forget!
We couldn't get words in edgeways. And when she went away,

Says Mullins—"I've met talkers, and clappers, in my day.

But before I'd marry that woman . . . " and he gives a hollow groan . . .

"I'd marry a mowing-machine : or the bell of a telephone !"

"Perhaps," I says, "Mr. Mullins, Mrs. Rye wouldn't marry you."

For I felt a trifle nettled to find it wouldn't do !

"She won't be asked," he answers. And then we said no more.

But when I tried another, 'twas a failure as before.

I was thinking I must drop it, for my patience was growing thin,

When one day, 'twas a Monday—Mrs. Rye comes running in,

Most nervous and excited—"Oh Mrs. Hyde," says she

"Have you heard what's happened to Mullins ?" It came like a shock to me !

"No !" I says. "What has happened ?" "He was crossing of the street

And a tram-car tipped him over : right off his poor dear feet ! . . ."

And she waves her apron rapid—"They've sent for the parish nurse,

And she's nothing but a stranger. And if he's taken worse, It's as like as not to kill him . . . " I waited to hear no more,

But tied down my old bonnet, and ran to Mullins' door.

The nurse was a new appointment. We hadn't met before. They said she was in with Mullins, in the parlour that he had :

And 'twas nothing but a shaking : and he wasn't very bad.

I mind I went in softly. And there sat this stranger nurse :

A pleasant-looking body : may I never see a worse—
There she sat, in the pretty apron that is always to my
taste :

And Mullins sat beside her, *with his arm around her waist !*

Talk of being knocked down with a feather! . . . I
nearly fainted away !

But the look on his face I can see now, and shall, to my
dying day.

Old ! He was young and handsome ! And he spoke with
dignity :—

“ Mrs. Hyde,” he says, “ this lady is going to marry me,
Though we haven’t seen each other since I was twenty-three.
I knew her as a boy,” he says, “ and I’ve loved her all my
life.

And I vowed no other woman should ever be my wife.

We were sweethearts at seventeen in the village where I
was born,

And others came between us——” “ Yes ! ” says she with
a smile like the morn,

“ It was all a mistake. But that’s over. It’s cleared up for
evermore.

Though I little thought to meet him when I reached old
England’s shore.

I’ve been nursing in Australia : away in foreign climes——”

“ Why ! ” says I. “ You might have married ! ” “ Yes,”
she says, “ Many times.

But I never meant to marry, for I never loved none but
him.”

I couldn’t speak for a minute, and my eyes began to
swim.

“ God bless you both,” I faltered. And I ran to tell my Jim.

That was the end of Mullins. His life was changed complete.

He turned that bright and cheery he was quite a pleasure to meet.

We hadn't a kinder neighbour, or friend, in all our street.

He went to Church on Sundays: he, who had scoffed at good.

And read his Bible reg'lar, as every Christian should.

They lived like a pair of love-birds: the man I wouldn't own

Had got more heart or feeling than a piece of paving-stone . . . !

Judge nobody, is the lesson: for you can never tell,
When you call folks crabs, and such like, *what there is inside the shell.*

And never say a bachelor won't marry: (as one expects :)
For after the End of Mullins you can't say who'll go next !!

THE END.

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